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THE WHITE RHINOCEROS . . . ALERT AND SUSPICIOUS.

ADVENTURES WITH ANIMALS AND MEN

BY
CHERRY KEARTON

AUTHOR OF
“PHOTOGRAPHING WILD LIFE ACROSS THE WORLD,”
“THE ANIMALS CAME TO DRINK,” “MY FRIEND TOTO,”
ETC.

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INTRODUCTION

A FAMOUS novelist has told in one of his books how I called at his camp under Kilimanjaro, during the war in German East Africa. I was in search of topographical information which no one there could give me and so I stayed for a talk round the camp fire:

“It was strange that he should have been able to ask a question about Central Africa which M . . . could not answer; but seeing that this was the case there was nothing left for Kear-ton to do but talk about himself.”

I am not sure that that last phrase is very kindly chosen! I remember that that night I told many stories of adventure and although it is true that the personal pronoun must have occurred very frequently in them, a man is surely justified in talking about himself when his life has been crowded with experiences which are quite outside the lot of the majority of men. One of the stories which I told that night was about the taking of a film of a lion-spearing expedition by the Masai: a record which is unrepeatable since the Masai were

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disarmed very soon afterwards. Another concerned a time when a hundred African buffalo stood waiting to attack me. And another—at least I think I told it then—described an adventure in India when I crawled alone down a tunnel through dense undergrowth to get a close-up portrait of a tiger.

When one has spent the best part of forty-four years in photographing wild animals in four out of the five continents, one unavoidably acquires a considerable repertoire of stories, some of them amusing, most of them hair-raising. Thus I have been chased by rhinos and elephants, I have been attacked by deadly beetles and ants as well as by lions, I was in the gondola of the first airship that flew over London, I was present at the capture of Antwerp by the Germans and I fought for three years in German East Africa—my war experiences being continually punctuated by adventures with wild animals. I have been chased by that dangerous creature the buffalo in three continents, America, Asia and Africa, a herd of stampeding elephants has charged around a tree in which I was hidden during a tropical storm, a deadly snake has crawled under my knees while I sat on the ground. I have had adventures on the cliffs of Ireland and Scotland as well as in the forests of

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Borneo. And again and again I have been in situations from which at the time there seemed to be no possible escape.

Looking back over these adventures, I do not feel that I need apologize for "talking about myself" in this book. It is indeed a record of my adventures with animals and men. I must, however, explain that it is not an attempt at a complete autobiography. I have, for example, made two expeditions to Algeria and the Sahara and one to Holland which are not here described: because although they provided many experiences of great interest, they did not produce "adventures" comparable to those which I have had in wilder countries. Nor have I attempted to narrate every adventure—even every exciting adventure—which befell me in Africa or India or the Rocky Mountains; if I were to do so I should fill not one volume but six.

If this were to be the full story of my life, I should have to write of my beloved chimpanzee, Mary; I should have to tell the story of my wanderings in Africa with another chimpanzee, Toto, and with a terrier, Pip (later known as Simba); my adventures in the caves of Borneo, happenings in Africa on a comparatively recent expedition when my wife very nearly lost her life

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amid a herd of elephants, my visit to an extraordinary island off the coast of Africa where the population consists of five million penguins. But all these things have been described in books which are still in print, and I do not wish to weary my readers with repetitions. Very few of the incidents in this book have been described before—only those which seem to me to be sufficiently outstanding and remarkable to bear re-telling.

I have, in fact, set down only those of my experiences which seem particularly far removed from those of less fortunate beings than myself, whose hearts do not ordinarily palpitate at the prospect of immediate and violent death. I do not wish to seem to exaggerate; but it is a fact that again and again my life has depended on my strength as a swimmer, my speed as a runner, my agility in climbing trees, my alertness in remembering which method of escape is most to be trusted in dealing with a particular animal, and—more than all else perhaps—on a great element of good fortune or, if you will, the kindness of Providence. Perhaps it is just because of these constant dangers and these narrow escapes, this uncertainty about the future and the ever-present possibility that an apparently peaceful scene may hide some source of immediate death, that big-

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game photography is the finest sport in the world —or perhaps I should say that it *was* in the days when most of my adventures took place, for nowadays many of its adherents render themselves so safe that the finest element of sport is entirely lacking.

I hope that this book may show those people who plan to photograph wild animals from protected motor-cars that they are missing most of the real thrills. It may show also that a knowledge of animal life leads directly to a love of wild creatures, a desire to protect them and preserve them, and a realization that the harmless camera can provide every thrill which accompanies the gun. To-day more people than ever before are declaring themselves lovers of peace. Is it too much to hope that when we have finally ceased to want to kill one another, we shall also lose the craving which leads too many people to the unnecessary slaughter of animals?

CHERRY KEARTON.



ONE OF MY EARLIEST PHOTOGRAPHS.



THE DUMMY SHEEP.



“THE LOWING HERD WINDS SLOWLY O’ER THE LEA.”



MY BROTHER RICHARD SHOULDERED THE RESPONSIBILITY
FOR ONE OF OUR EARLIEST PICTURES.



IN DEEP WATER

CHAPTER ONE

THE MAKING OF A PHOTOGRAPHER

IT is in the nature of things that square holes eventually get rubbed into a state of smoothness which enables them to fit fairly comfortably their round pegs; whereas the round holes get scratched into an angularity that sufficiently fits the square pegs. But there are some people—and I myself am one of them—who are represented by pegs of such irregular shape that neither a square hole nor a round one will ever accommodate itself to them. For such people life can carry little happiness except in the rare instances when they are able to carve out an entirely new-shaped hole, never before thought of, but exactly fitting their peculiarities.

Most fortunately for myself, I was able to do that. In my earliest years, three characteristics developed in me: inventiveness, a love of the open country, and a curiosity concerning wild creatures. There was at that time no possible career which embraced those three things. But before I was eighteen, I was able to invent one that did: I

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went into the woods and the fields, photographing birds with a camera which I had myself adapted to that special purpose.

Up to that time, books and articles on natural history were always illustrated with drawings; the camera was never used for that purpose until my brother Richard and I began in 1892 the work which resulted three years later in the publication of a book on British Birds' Nests.

To-day, an occasional bird-book, intended more for the art-lover than for the naturalist, is illustrated with fine woodcuts: in the swing of the pendulum, the old-fashioned has become the ultra-modern. Otherwise the use of photography for this purpose is general. A science which began with a picture of a thrush's nest in a wood near Enfield, has grown until every living creature in every country of the world has "sat for its portrait" to the photographer or the cinematographer. And that enormous development arose from the purchase by me, in 1889, of a second-hand camera for which I paid the sum of fourteen shillings. Or earlier still, if you like it arose from the days when my father first took me for tramps over the Yorkshire moors and talked to me of animals and birds.

THE MAKING OF A PHOTOGRAPHER

I was born on July 8th, 1871, in an old stone house at Thwaite, a lonely village which lies under the shade of Shunnerfell, a mountain some 2,500 feet high in the upper reaches of Swaledale, Yorkshire. In this wild and romantic spot my father lived and worked as a yeoman farmer, on the land which his ancestors had owned for generations before him. Our sheep grazed on Shunnerfell and on the hills above Butter Tubs, and at certain times of the year I would be sent to bring them in—a task I loved because it took me into the wild moorland where there were no confining walls. Sometimes a mist would creep over the mountains and then, knowing that I could not find my way home, I would sit down and watch the sheep: they always fed in the direction of home, and I had then only to keep in that direction, getting a fresh guide whenever I felt in danger of once more losing the way.

My father was a keen naturalist, and almost as soon as I could walk he used to take me with him on to the mountains, showing me grouse, curlews, merlins, ravens, falcons and commoner birds, especially the green and golden plovers. He would talk to me about them and about their nests, stopping every now and again on our way home down some wooded gill to bid me creep very

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quietly in his footsteps till we could gently move branches to look down on a nest. I remember being very keen on locating a plover's nest—I did not realize how difficult it would be to find such a shallow depression in the ground, carpeted with a few blades of dry grass and containing eggs which harmonized with their surroundings. One day we startled a sitting plover and the bird fluttered away apparently with a damaged wing, while I gave chase and my father, who, of course, knew this trick of the plovers when surprised, stood laughing as the bird suddenly flew up and away.

The search for nests became a passion with me. Thanks to my father's example, it never occurred to me to rob them; I merely wanted to find and examine them, adding to my rapidly growing store of bird knowledge. Nothing would stop me when I saw a nest—not even the punishment I had for disobeying a school rule against "birds' nesting" when I had most innocently climbed a tree to study the nest of a missel thrush.

I learned the rudiments of natural history in those days also from my brother Richard, who was nine years older than I. When he was ten, he had fallen from a wall and the ministrations of a drunken bonesetter had left him a permanent

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cripple. While other boys played games, he occupied himself with studying birds; and I remember how in my earliest years I used to help him in carrying feathers from the chicken-run to a little bridge over a stream where we dropped them for the swallows to catch as they flew underneath.

By the time I reached my 'teens I had not only acquired the interests which have been mine through life, but I had learnt to be still and patient when watching wild creatures, and to know that the reward of seeing a mother bird alight on her nest and start to feed her youngsters, was ample for an hour of cramp and watchfulness.

When I was eleven, Richard went to London, to work in the office of Cassell, Petter and Galpin in *La Belle Sauvage*—better known nowadays as Cassell's, the publishers. Four years later my father died and I, who at the age of fifteen had never even been in a railway-train, left the moorland to try my fortune in the City as a man of business. I too went to Cassell's, starting work beside my brother in the advertising department.

Some time after my arrival in London I saw in the window of a shop in Fleet Street a small hand camera, made of bright metal. The price was

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only five shillings—including two plates in black rubber bags, some developing powders and a page of “instructions.” I bought it—and walked away, the proud owner of my first camera and quite certain that I was going to take wonderful pictures. Perhaps I did: but neither I nor anyone else ever saw them, for when I pulled down the bathroom blind and began developing, the plates did as the “instructions” said they would do, and “went black”—and remained in that condition.

I was so disheartened by this experience that there and then I nearly abandoned photography for ever. But it happened that another boy in the office possessed a camera which had cost a guinea. This boy had the character of a chameleon: first he was engrossed in electric batteries, then in steam engines, then in the camera, then in something else, and when he tired of the camera I bought it from him for fourteen shillings. I didn’t realize at the time what a bargain I had made, but that camera was the turning-point in my life. Playing about with the five-shilling outfit, I had eventually mastered its principles, so that by the time I started out with the superior one slung by a strap across my shoulders, I knew enough about photography at any rate to avoid the more obvious mistakes.

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In the early spring, Richard and I went to stay with some friends on a farm near Enfield. Of course I carried the camera wherever I went, and one day when we discovered a thrush's nest among the branches of a fallen tree, I thought I would take a picture. Richard said: "That's an idea. Let's do a book on natural history and illustrate it by photography. I'll do the writing and you can take the pictures."

So began our partnership which was to last for many years, and so the first photographically-illustrated work on natural history came into being.

We soon found that it was easier to plan the making of such a book than to carry it out. In fact, we had to do nearly three years' work, nearly all in our "spare time," before it was finished. The first photograph, at Enfield, was perhaps the easiest of the lot; for others we had to scale cliffs and lower ourselves over precipices, to scramble on small rocky islands and to climb mountains. I had in addition to use my inventive powers later on in making a soundless cinematograph camera —it amazed me how sharp of hearing the birds were—by lining a box with thick felt with a padding of sawdust between the felt and the woodwork, and then placing the camera inside.

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And—more important than all—we had to invent “hides.”

It was obvious from the first that something of the sort was necessary. You can’t walk up to a bird sitting on a nest and expect it to keep still while its photograph is being taken. So we began to disguise ourselves.

Richard first thought of a coat of a mossy-green colour which at a little distance might prove indistinguishable from grass and bushes. But the most that that did was to keep the birds from taking to flight: it didn’t render them unsuspecting, and what we most wanted was to photograph birds in their natural state—not as they are when suspecting danger. So in the best spirit of camouflage we set to work. One of the simplest of our “hides” was a hollow stub of ash which one of us would draw over his head when standing in thick undergrowth; but we soon found that it was necessary to cover our whole bodies and also the camera. We then made artificial tree-trunks and imitation rocks; but of course, they could only be used in suitable country—if a large rock suddenly appears one morning at the edge of a field where there are no other rocks, the birds can hardly be blamed for avoiding its neighbourhood. So we kept the rocks for rock-strewn country and

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the trees for woods, and tried to think of something which would appear natural in the fields or alongside hedges. We came to the conclusion that the only things which might suddenly arrive in fields without arousing suspicion were rubbish heaps and animals. And we therefore constructed rubbish heaps and animals calculated to deceive the most watchful of birds, but able, nevertheless, to conceal both the photographer and his camera.

We were amazingly successful, considering our inexperience. The rubbish heap was a tent-like structure of canvas with leaves and sticks and dirt piled thickly on top of it. I would squat down on the ground and then Richard would cover me with the framed canvas, on to which he would pile all the rubbish he could find. My embarrassment may be imagined, when one day a pair of rustic lovers came with arms around each other's waist and elected to sit in the pleasant shade of that convenient rubbish heap; they "billed" and "cooed" just like the occupants of the nest I was trying to photograph, and I was filled with horror at the thought of what would happen if the rubbish heap suddenly rose into the air behind them and I walked out from beneath it.

A still more embarrassing experience befell me one day when I took up my position inside a

bullock—a most life-like bullock, except that my legs descended through its stomach into a clump of weeds. My brother left me, and there I remained crouching over the camera and ready to take photographs through a small hole in the animal's chest. I suffered considerably from cramp, but all would have been well but for the springing up of a sudden gale which completely overturned the bullock and left me on my back inside the "animal" in a small declivity, with my legs pointing at the sky. My studies of natural history thereupon advanced, for I discovered how difficult it is for a four-legged animal to get to its feet when it suffers from stiffness of the joints—in fact, I was still in that uncomfortable position when my brother returned an hour later.

Besides the bullock, we had a sheep—made by Mr. Rowland Ward with such success that when it travelled by train we found a group of yokels gathered round the guard's van making bets with one another as to whether or not the creature was dead.

Open-air photography, when one is not used to it, presents all sorts of difficulties. One of the first that I had to solve was that of changing plates in my one and only slide out of doors in broad daylight; and I did it by putting the box of plates

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and the slide on the ground, covering them with my coat, the edges of which I fastened down with earth and stones, and then kneeling and putting my hands down the sleeves, so that I could, as it were, work blindly inside a little tent while I remained outside. One day in Yorkshire I thought I had a better idea than that: I could find perfect darkness if I penetrated far enough into a disused lead-mine. I did—but the darkness proved excessive and I missed my footing and fell into a sump-hole, ruining my plates, a suit of clothes and my temper. So after that I kept to the coat idea, until I improved on it several years later with a specially-made bag.

At the same time as Richard and I were preparing our first book, I used to do a good deal of photography for Cassell's. I illustrated an article which my brother wrote for *Chums*, and then one on the Drury Lane Pantomime which Philip (now Sir Philip) Gibbs wrote for *Little Folks*. The theatre pictures had to be taken by magnesium light, and Gibbs, who was in charge of the lighting arrangements, had to hold the magnesium ribbon in his hand—I wonder whether he still remembers the blisters that ensued when he held on to the ribbon a few seconds too long. We photographed Dan Leno and Herbert Campbell

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and other “stars” of that day, and then hurried to Gibbs’s home in South London to develop the plates. We had no dark room, so we lay on our tummies under the bed.

I tried as far as possible to photograph wild life subjects only with my brother, but, of course, I was not my own master and I had to attend to business. I took some pictures for Aflalo, and then I was sent to Sandringham to illustrate an article on Princess Alexandra’s pets.

I remember that visit because it was the first time that I photographed wild animals, and though their wildness was of the caged variety it may be that seeds sown that day in my subconscious mind grew into the urge which later led me to spend the best days of my life among the wild creatures of Africa. But oddly enough, although I recollect the animals, I can at this distance of time recall little of my first close-up view of royalty: the King and Queen of Norway were staying at Sandringham at the time, on their honeymoon, and doubtless I saw them, respectfully and marvelling as a young man does on such occasions. In any case, I undoubtedly boasted at the time of my association with the Great. Shortly afterwards I was staying at an inn on my way to the moors at the top of Teesdale. While

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standing in the doorway in the rough clothes which I wore for outdoor photography, I heard two smartly-dressed ladies in a dog-cart peremptorily calling to me: "Here, young man, hold this horse!" I did them that service and received twopence for my pains. And then I heard the landlady of the inn, all of a flutter, whispering to the ladies: "But that young man has just been staying at Sandringham with the Princess of Wales!"

When I was twenty-two, my brother and I took a hurried visit to Scotland and succeeded in securing a picture of an eagle's nest with two young ones in it. We had very little time to spare and had to hurry over our work—much as we should have liked to do so, we couldn't wait till the parent birds returned. Then we dashed back some three miles to the keeper's house, picked up our baggage, caught the boat to Oban and eventually made our way to Girvan late in the evening. We hired a man to take us to Ailsa Craig at three o'clock the next morning, and by breakfast time we were at the lighthouse and ready to hunt for spots from which we could take pictures of the gannets.

This, of course, meant a certain amount of rough climbing, until at last I was able to set up

my tripod on a large flat slab of rock. Just as I was ready to focus the camera, the screw which held the camera and tripod together fell out, hit a rock, bounced, and dropped over the cliff. This was disaster. In any ordinary situation I should have been able to use a stick as a temporary substitute, but in this wilderness of stone and cliff and sea, there were no sticks or twigs. I hadn't even a pencil and at first I thought that there was nothing for it but to return to the lighthouse far below—which would have meant missing my train to London. Then, as I looked despairingly round, I realized that the whole place was littered with gannet quills—and of course, I could use one of them just as successfully as a stick.

With that, I felt completely restored to happiness and confidence. I got the camera into position and buried my head under a black cloth while I focused. And then suddenly—a ghastly moment!—I felt myself moving. The ground—the rock—the cliff—all seemed to be moving under my feet; and moving in the direction of a great drop that led to the sea.

It did not take a second to whip off that cloth and see what was happening. This seemingly solid rock on which I had put myself and my camera, was sliding—and sliding rapidly—down

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a steep slope towards the edge of the cliff. Already I was within a few feet of that drop. Then, clutching my camera, I rolled sideways—and a second later the whole slab of rock plunged over the edge to fall hundreds of feet into the sea.

I remember that I lay still for several seconds on the very edge, wondering if more of the rock would follow. When I realized that the incident—which up to that time was my greatest adventure—was happily over, I got very cautiously to my feet and crawled up the stony slope again. I found another site for my camera, a surer one this time, and before long I had succeeded in getting that photograph of the gannets which had so nearly cost me my life.

That adventure—indeed, the whole of that brief trip—fired my imagination. The birds we had photographed in England had introduced us to many of the marvels of Nature; but here was wild country with rocky mountains, magnificent cliffs and wild seas—here were peregrine falcons, gannets, eagles and a hundred other birds, the very sight of which was beautiful and thrilling. Supposing we could actually photograph the great golden eagle in flight! Supposing we could come again and again to these lonely, magic

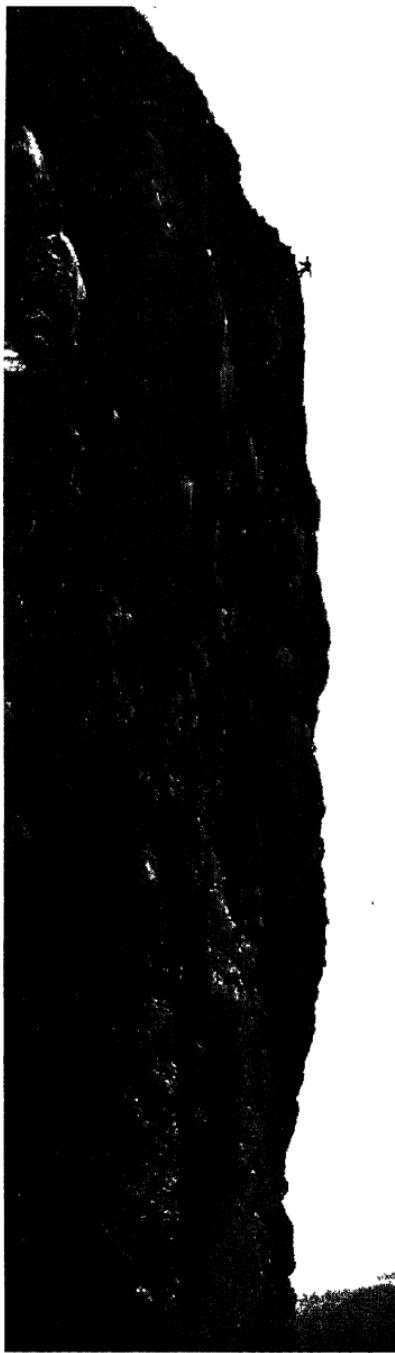
islands and photograph all the wild sea-birds that lived upon them!

But there was an immediate difficulty. Photography so far from London would mean devoting to it far more time than we had to spare. I "sounded" my chief in Fleet Street, hoping that he would be fired with my enthusiasm and would agree to my spending some months of the year with my cameras. But he had quite other ideas on the matter, and the upshot of it was that I decided to take him at his word when he told me that I could not serve two masters.

So I left Fleet Street and entrusted my fate, except for one return to Fleet Street at a later date, to my cameras.

I went first to the Island of Mull. It was the early spring of 1894, then, and when I had climbed the mountain near the top of which I had found the eagles' nest the previous year, I realized that I was too early for the young eagles —the nest only contained eggs, though the parent birds were perched on a rock high up on a neighbouring hill, where they stood apparently watching us.

On this visit I was accompanied by one of the Duke of Argyle's gamekeepers, and between us we placed on the ledge of rock near the nest a



ANYONE WHO WANTS ADVENTURE CAN HAVE HIS FILL ON THE CLIFFS.



SWINGING OVER A MIGHTY CLIFF ABOVE THE SEA.

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number of stones which were to form the base of a hide. We planned to come back a day or two later and add others, so that the hide would grow gradually and the birds would become accustomed to it without realizing its changing character. But the keeper had other matters to attend to, and as, day after day, he found it impossible to come to the mountain, I finally decided to go alone. If I had been more experienced I should have realized the advantage of having as a companion someone who knew the country. For I let myself get so much preoccupied with my work—and particularly with trying to photograph the nest and eggs—that I failed to notice the signs of an approaching snowstorm. The consequence was that I was caught in blinding snow, and in trying to make my way through it down that difficult mountain-side, I slipped over a small cliff, damaging myself seriously and breaking my camera.

I had to take the camera to Oban to get it repaired. The chemist who undertook the work was rather inquisitive as to what I was doing there with a camera so early in the year; but I didn't want to give away all my secrets, so I evaded the question, giving him the impression that I was taking pictures of Scottish scenery. "Ah," said

the chemist, "anybody can do that. Why don't you strike out a new line"—and as he spoke he took up a magazine with a number of photographs in it—"a new line like this man Kearton? Why, he's making a fortune."

Unhappily, by the time my camera was mended and my strained muscles repaired sufficiently for further climbing activity, it was too late to go back to Mull and the eagles' nest. But I went to various other islands and then visited Achnakarry, where through the kindness of Lochiel of Lochiel, I made a close study of the last pair of ospreys in the British Isles, spending the best part of three days actually *in* the loch, with the water often up to my chest.

It was just after this, while on my way to photograph some ptarmigan, that I made what was up to then my most hazardous attempt at cliff climbing—though not, as it happened, in the cause of photography. I saw a sheep stranded on a ledge of rock half-way down a cliff and although a gamekeeper's son who was with me said it was impossible, I determined to try to rescue the animal. It was an exceeding difficult descent, but thanks to my life in Yorkshire I was an expert climber and I managed at last to reach the ledge. Then I found that the sheep was almost starving

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and too weak to move; so I tied its legs with my handkerchief, slung it on to my back and clambered up to the top of the cliff. And though that is an easy thing to write, it was certainly not an easy climb with that burden; indeed, the shepherds to whom I finally handed over the sheep, refused to believe that any one man alone could have done it.

That incident directed my thoughts towards cliff climbing, and especially to rope climbing of which I knew little, and made me realize that if I was going to do all I wanted to do, I must learn that art so as to be able to have the fullest use of my hands.

Consequently, when I went to Ireland I was very glad to receive lessons in rope climbing from John Usher, the famous Irish naturalist: I used to practise up and down an eighteen-foot wall at the end of his garden.

There is, of course, a good deal of difference between climbing down a wall of that height and swinging over a mighty cliff above the sea; and sometimes in those days I used to let my imagination play, with painful results. Just before we went to the coast, I began to dream of cliffs—and then something happened which has always seemed to me to be odd and uncanny, although

I know that many others have had similar experiences.

One night I dreamt that I was standing on the edge of a cliff, with the sea foaming on great rocks far below me. I saw the scene very vividly, and in great detail: the colours of pieces of rock as the sun's rays caught them, the odd shape of one particular corner, the shelves on which birds had made their nests—all these photographed themselves on my mind. And then, in the dream, my foot suddenly slipped and I found myself dropping, down, down, down.

I did not tell this dream to my host—I thought he would attribute it to apprehension. But the picture remained with me; not merely the sensation of falling, which is common enough, but this very real and exact scene on the edge of the cliffs. Three days later, we set out to the coast, intending to secure pictures of peregrine falcons and ravens. And directly we arrived at the spot which John Usher had chosen, I knew that it was the scene of my dream. Shapes, colourings, all were the same. Unquestionably, this was the identical place, which I had never seen, but of which I had dreamed so vividly three nights before. And the rest of that dream? Was I now to slip, as I had done in the dream, and then to

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drop, drop, drop, towards those sea-splashed, jutty rocks below?

And yet it all seemed so absurd. How could I tell John Usher that I wouldn't go near the edge—I, who had been telling him of adventures on Ailsa Craig, of cliffs in Yorkshire—and give no better reason than a dream? Perhaps my physical courage is greater than my moral courage. In any case, I decided that it was easier to face the cliff than to face my friend, and when the ropes were fastened I let myself be lowered over the edge.

I suppose if that dream had had its expected outcome, I should not now be writing this. Did I defeat Fate by the caution with which I felt every step of my way? Or was my dream a coincidence? Or did the Powers at the last minute change their minds? It is not for me to say. But if nothing else resulted from the experience, at least my first essay in cliff climbing by means of ropes taught me many things about the possibility of taking precautions, for the prospect of being killed was before me every minute and I did not leave a single thing to chance.

And yet, of course, the essence of such climbing is that the climber has to put his life almost entirely into someone else's hands—those of the

man who holds the rope at the top of the cliff. How great is the faith that is needed I have learnt on more than one occasion. Once, in those early days in Ireland, John Usher sent with me a man named Ginger, who duly lowered me over the cliff. When I was practically level with the ledge on which I wanted to photograph falcons, I realized that the ledge was overhung so that, instead of being against the face of the cliff, I was swinging in mid-air. There was a strong sea wind, and I began to turn—like a piece of meat on a spit over an old-fashioned fire. It was exceedingly uncomfortable, and I wasn't quite sure how much twisting a cliff-rope could stand. However, at last I managed to swing myself in and to grasp a projecting rock close to the ledge.

It took me some time to get my picture, but at last I tugged at the guide-rope to show that I was ready to be hauled up. There was no response. Again and again I gave the signal, but still nothing happened. Altogether I waited alone on that narrow ledge half-way down the face of the cliff for two hours, and long before the end of that time I had decided that I was marooned and finally abandoned, with no hope of escape, since the cliff was unclimbable. I was on the verge of abandoning all hope when one of the tugs at the

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rope which all the while I gave periodically, received an answer; and a few minutes later I was once more at the top of the cliff and on the surface of the earth.

Then I learnt the cause of my adventure—and if my readers find it an amusing one, that is certainly more than I found it at the time. A few days earlier, Ginger, going to the Fair, had picked up a five-pound note: and as he was alone at the time, he slipped it quickly into his pocket. Shortly before he came out with me, enquiries were started about the disappearance of this note, and as Ginger had been spreading the effects of his new wealth fairly widely, he felt more than a suspicion that the police were on his track. During the morning, while he was alone at the top of the cliff and I was on the ledge, he saw someone coming across a field towards him; and having no doubt at all that this was the approach of Nemesis, he jumped to his feet and fled—leaving me to my fate. And it was not until two hours later that another passer-by found the crowbars and the rope, and using his intelligence to good effect, came to the conclusion that perhaps someone might be attached to the other end of the rope.

I had a somewhat similar experience in Westmoreland, where I was going over a rocky, inland

cliff, with two men at the top to lower me. Suddenly I felt myself falling far too rapidly, as if the men up above were paying out rope as fast as they could. I knew that if things went on at this rate, I should suddenly reach the end of the rope—and I didn't feel sure that the men, if they couldn't hold better than this, would be able to hold the end of the rope at all; in which case it would slip out of their hands and I should go hurtling downwards. So I held fast to the guide-rope and managed to settle myself into the out-growing branches of a tree. And then suddenly I realized that the rope was again under proper control, so that I was able safely to complete my business and return. Then I found what had happened. One of the two men had brought his dog with him and this dog had put up a hare. Coursing being a favourite sport in the district, great excitement prevailed, and the owner of the dog bolted off after the animal—leaving the other man, whose attention had been distracted, quite unable to hold my weight, so that the rope simply ran through his hands. It was only when the hare got away and dog and man gave up the chase, that steps were taken to see whether or not I had been killed.

Certainly anyone who wants adventure can

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have his fill on the cliffs and coasts of the British Isles. He may, indeed, have more than his fill, for there are times when even the greatest precautions do not make one aware of all the dangers. Once, at St. Kilda, my brother (who, in spite of being crippled, was always very active) followed me on to a ledge of rock half-way down a particularly difficult piece of cliff. From there I crawled along and took photographs of a group of sea-birds gathered on another ledge. Then my brother climbed back while I lingered to take another photograph. The way to the top of the cliff was difficult, as it consisted of a thirty-foot climb up a split in the face of the rock about two feet wide. At the top of this crack, a boulder was lying, half-projecting over the edge: but before we started we had made sure that this boulder was secure, because obviously if it should be displaced it would crash down straight on to the ledge. Now, my brother safely climbed to the top and got past the boulder without touching it; but he must, I suppose, have touched some other piece of rock on which the boulder depended. For suddenly some instinct led me to glance up, and I saw, to my amazement and horror, that the boulder was just starting on its way down. In a flash I jumped sideways, all but overbalancing

and tumbling off the ledge into the sea below; and then the boulder crashed on to the very spot on which I had been standing a second before, and bounded over the edge to fall into the sea, eight hundred feet below.

One day, in Ireland, John Usher and I were taking pictures by flashlight of a chough's nest in a cave running straight into the cliff from the edge of the sea, when we found that in our interest in our work we had forgotten the tide, which had come up and cut us off. There was apparently no way back except the way we had come—by ropes down the cliff half a mile away—and since swimming in those rock-strewn seas seemed almost equivalent to suicide, we felt that we had little chance of reaching those ropes. But the tide was still rising fast and we knew that before long we should be washed out of the cave. Usher, who knew the coast intimately, could see no hope at all, except the faint one of swimming; but I determined to try to climb the cliff.

There was a zigzag crack about an inch and a half wide running up from where we stood, and—although Usher insisted that it was impossible—I thought I might be able to get enough hold in it to make my way up.

It was difficult enough. I found that the crack

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rose so steeply that I could not get a grip on its edge and after many failures I decided that the only way to make use of it was to wedge my hand in the crack and then to try to close my fist so that it became held like an iron bar in a vice. Then with this support I drew myself up a few inches, got what foothold I could, withdrew my hand (leaving a good deal of skin behind) and then closed my fist again in the crack a little higher up. Foot by foot I had to do this for nearly forty feet. Then to my joy I found the way easier, and eventually with both hands badly torn and blood smeared over my face and clothes, I made my way to the top. And I was just in time to run to the rope-man and bring him and the ropes to rescue my friend.

Sometimes in moments of idle speculation I wonder what would have happened if there had not been that narrow crack and willy-nilly we had had to try to swim. I am a very strong swimmer: but I do not think I could have accomplished that, for the waves would have flung me against the rocks and left me senseless. I had just such an experience once in the Saltee Islands, when I wanted to photograph some nesting cormorants. I thought I could swim across a very rough stretch of sea with one end of the climbing-

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rope tied round my waist, and then get my camera after me according to the principle of the "breeches buoy." Rashly, I made the attempt. Before I had fairly started, I felt myself picked up as if by the hand of a giant and thrown back on to the rocks. I was cut and bruised and for the moment almost stunned. But nevertheless, I tried again a few minutes later, and after a fierce struggle with the sea I managed to get a footing on the rocky island. So I got my photographs and what is more I returned safely by the same route: but it was a risk which I should probably not have taken in maturer years.

Amid such adventures as these, I learnt the art of nature photography. Up to this time my subjects were mostly birds; but birds are so shy, so ready to take wing, and so quick in flight when once their suspicions become knowledge, that there can be no better school for photographers. I had learnt to approach noiselessly on all kinds of ground, to conceal myself against any sort of background, and above all, I had acquired that essential thing—limitless patience. And in addition I was now completely the master of my craft: if I could get within range of my object, no technical difficulty was likely to defeat me.

Thus armed, my thoughts turned to foreign

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countries. I had photographed nearly every bird found in the British Isles, and a good many small animals. Why should I not now go abroad and photograph creatures which were not to be found at home?

CHAPTER TWO

INTERLUDE IN THE AIR

I HAD so often photographed birds in flight that I suppose it was natural that I should take an early opportunity to see the world from their angle and discover what the phrase "bird's-eye view" really meant. Nowadays, a good many people have had that experience, but in 1908 very few could do more than guess what cities and villages and fields would look like as one flew above them. During the summer of the previous year I had been in Scotland watching the golden eagle as it soared overhead and alighted on its nest, and I had wondered then what I must look like to the bird as I lay on the heather—and so wondering, I had resolved that as soon as opportunity offered I would find out.

The chance came quite soon. In the following May the Spencer brothers decided to fly their airship over London and to endeavour to circle round St. Paul's Cathedral. The idea came to me at once that I would go with them—and that I would not only see London from the position of a

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bird but I would record what I saw with a cinematograph camera.

I believe this was the first time that cinematograph pictures from the air were ever taken, and certainly the film, when it was shown at the Alhambra Theatre in Leicester Square, aroused a great deal of interest and astonishment. Incidentally, the taking of it very nearly cost me my life.

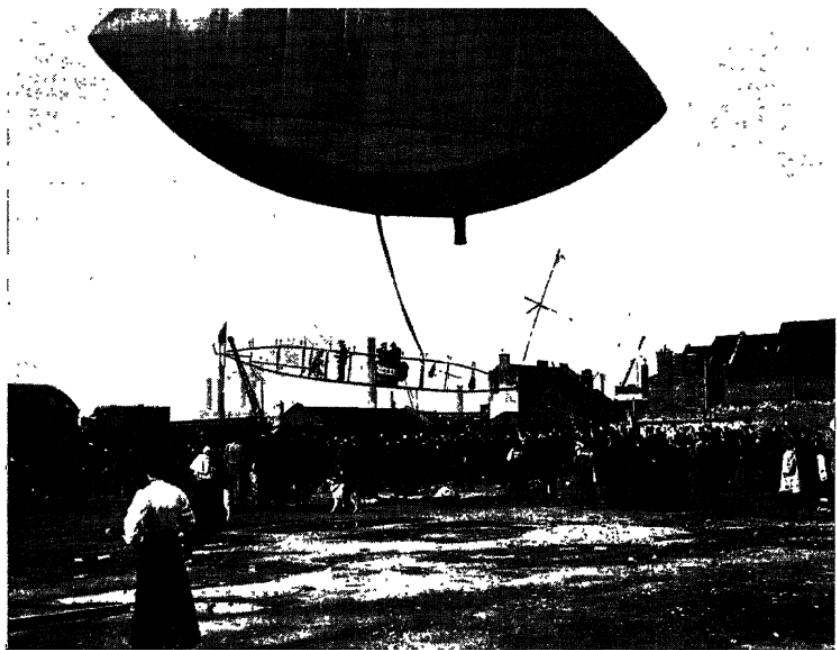
First of all I went to the Spencers and got their enthusiastic support for the idea. Then I approached Charles Urban, who was a pioneer in the film industry, a man of great vision and a firm believer in the "educational" value of cinematography. (It is odd to remember that in those days to call a film "educational" was a real advertisement for it, whereas now any educational quality is considered the greatest drawback which must be either omitted altogether or disguised under the cloak of "entertainment" so that it is quite unrecognizable.) Urban showed instructional pictures and what we would now call "news films" at the Alhambra, and made a great success of it.

He was delighted at my idea, particularly when I suggested that I should drop the film, directly it was taken, on to the roof of his new studios in

Wardour Street. It would be a sensational novelty in pictures, he declared, and to enhance the interest he would have a camera on his roof, so that the public should see not only my aerial views of London, but also the airship as it appeared from the ground and even the parcel of film being thrown overboard.

So all—up to that point—was happily arranged and on the morning of May 4th I made my way to a field beside some gas-works a little way outside London, where the gasbag was being filled.

The airship was certainly not a Zeppelin, but in those days, when one was only accustomed to pear-shaped balloons, it seemed an extraordinary sight. (I suppose it would cause the same degree of astonishment if anyone could see it to-day, but for different reasons!) The gasbag was about seventy feet long, pointed at both ends, encased in open netting and decorated with a wavy line of colour latitudinally around it. From the network a number of cords hung down to support a framework of bamboo poles. These poles were clamped together with broad metal rings and although it all looked exceedingly frail, I was relieved to discover that it was really very strong. The framework consisted of one bar at the top and two underneath, the lower ones being joined



THE AIRSHIP WAS CERTAINLY NOT A ZEPPELIN.



IT ALL LOOKED EXCEEDINGLY FRAIL.



A PARADISE FOR THE PHOTOGRAPHER.

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by bamboo struts about six feet apart, while other bamboos joined the single top bar to the two below. Altogether, this framework was about forty feet long, four feet high and—at the bottom—four feet across.

Near the centre of the framework was fixed a wicker basket, exactly like those which used to be suspended under balloons, and capable of holding three men in very close proximity. The usual sandbags were hung round the outside of the basket.

The propeller was in the bow. It was made of gas-tubing covered at either end with a taut strip of canvas.

Nearly half-way between the basket and the propeller was the engine, standing on a platform across the two lower bars of the framework and secured also to the top bar. It was a little bigger than a modern motor-cycle engine and could, I believe, produce about seven horse-power.

Apart from a large canvas rudder at the stern, several "reserve" bags of sand attached to the framework, a cylinder of petrol fastened to the upper bar, and the various ropes which connected the gasbag with the basket and the petrol with the engine, that was the whole of our mechanism. There were no "fittings and furniture" outside the

basket; and if any of the crew wanted to go from the basket to the engine, it was necessary to walk very precariously along one of the lower bamboo poles of the framework, holding on for further support to the upper bar.

My position in this outfit was in the basket, to which the tripod of my cinematograph camera was securely lashed. I had a feeling that I should have liked to be lashed to something myself, for when I looked first at the bamboo framework and then at the thin cords by which we were suspended from the gasbag, it was impossible to avoid the reflection that our lives, quite literally, hung by a thread. But I comforted myself in my knowledge of the two Spencers who were with me: they were men of iron nerve and, having known them for years, I was able to put trust in their assurance, that the airship was "as safe as an arm-chair."

In any case I hadn't at first much opportunity for thinking about the dangers, because I was busy with my camera, taking pictures of the surrounding crowd, of the men doing their best to hold the airship down as the full complement of gas was reached, and finally—as the elder Spencer at last held up his hand as a signal to "let go"—of the earth dropping away beneath our feet.

The first excitement came at once, when we

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appeared to be going to sail bang into a big building. But the ship answered her helm and we were rising rapidly, so that we cleared the roof with a few feet to spare. Then up we went and straight towards London.

I saw the Thames like a silver snake beneath me and tiny rectangular patterns which I knew were the roofs of houses. I saw fields like a limitless chessboard and thin, pale, winding streaks which were roads. Tiny dark spots showed on the roads and occasionally in the fields, and some of them seemed to move; and suddenly I thought: "That is what the eagle saw. Those are men and women. To a bird I would be just a dark spot on a patterned ground, not even as interesting as a ant looks to me as I look at it on an ant-hill." And then I reflected that it was really odd that Man, who thinks so much of his own powers, should be regarded by that lower species, the birds, as no more than a dark, uninteresting dot on the landscape.

But my reflections and moralizings were suddenly interrupted. We were now between three and four thousand feet up, when suddenly the engine began to back-fire and I noticed that the propeller was revolving much more slowly than it had done at the start. Then the ship suddenly

heeled over, canted on one side, seemed to think of turning round and then to decide against it. At one second the nose pointed upwards, at the next it pointed downwards.

Though I hadn't realized it, we had in a few minutes dropped more than a thousand feet, so that we were threatened with a sudden descent on to the London roofs. Spencer let go several of the sandbags and with extraordinary swiftness we rose—not climbing upwards and forwards, but simply rising straight like a balloon. London quickly disappeared from view and we were soon enveloped in clouds.

It was an eerie experience in those days to feel oneself floating in the clouds with no sight of the earth below, and for a moment my original doubts of the strength of cords and bamboo poles threatened to return. But my attention was very soon distracted—by the engine, which now started a series of explosions. At the same time there was a strong smell of gas, as much of it was let out to counteract our sudden rise. Then there came a bang which dwarfed all those which had preceded it and sounded as if the whole outfit was blowing up.

For a second I thought that that had happened and I shut my eyes, expecting to find myself

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hurtling through space. But when I opened them, the basket was still around me, the frail bamboo poles still stretched ahead and astern, and the gasbag still floated un-rent above. Incidentally, we were still surrounded by clouds. But there was one great change—complete silence reigned, for the engine had entirely stopped.

My eyes followed the direction of Spencer's and I saw what had happened: the pipe that led from the petrol tank to the engine had broken. We weren't equipped for repairs under weigh, so that was quite definitely that. We should get no more service out of our engine and henceforth we were to be as helpless as a non-dirigible balloon.

And yet we had certainly been lucky. It had been bad enough to smell the gas we were letting out, but when I saw the broken petrol pipe I expected immediate disaster. By all the rules, we ought to have gone up in a sheet of flame and then to have tumbled, charred and unrecognizable, to the earth. Why we didn't, I don't know.

But though we had luckily escaped that disaster, our situation was very unpleasant. We had now reached a height of fourteen thousand feet. My nose was bleeding and I felt the hammering of piston-rods in both my ears. But since the control

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of our destiny was certainly not in my hands and I could do nothing either to help or to harm our position, I pulled myself together and began to think about taking some more photographs.

We had come above the cloud-bank and were now moving steadily along, about one hundred feet above it. The sun was shining and turning the clouds into a beautiful white. Then we suddenly found ourselves turning round and round in a sort of whirlpool and at the same moment I saw that the airship was distinctly shadowed on the banked-up clouds surrounding us. On this shadow I directed my camera and I obtained so successful a picture—despite the difficulties of nose-bleeding and other matters—that when the film was shown on the screen, the shadow of my own hand turning the handle of the camera was distinctly visible.

Sometimes the airship floated steadily, sometimes she swung giddily round and round as if caught in a whirlpool. And then, suddenly, that whirlpool seemed to take complete possession of us and to swallow us up. For a second we hung uncertainly—and then we dropped. Straight through the clouds we went, down, down, down, and I had a sensation like that of the nightmare in which one falls headlong and horribly over the

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edge of a cliff. In very little time we passed right through the clouds, and the earth came suddenly into view. I remember realizing with a spasm of relief that at any rate we were no longer over London—we might at least come crashing down on to the comparative softness of a field. I saw a train, crawling along the ground like a caterpillar, dark patches which were woods, thin white roads, a village, and a silver jewel in a green setting which must have been the village pond. I saw Spencer looking anxiously around to see what he could throw overboard to lighten the ship and check the speed of our fall. All the bags of sand had already gone, and it seemed to me that there was nothing else which we could jettison. Spencer shouted to me to help and I yelled back that I had nothing with me of any weight. I saw him shouting again, but I heard nothing. Then I saw that he was pointing at me—straight at me. For a second I wondered what he meant: surely not that I was to get ready to jump from the basket? At fifteen yards from the ground I might try to jump into a tree, if there was one, but on to the bare earth—no! It would surely be better to stay where I was and to trust to Providence that the framework and the basket itself would break our fall. But then, as I moved slightly and his

finger still pointed, I realized that it was not at me he was pointing, but at the camera.

Would I have sacrificed my camera and the film for which I was risking my life? I suppose so. I don't know. For the question never arose, because the camera had been lashed so firmly to the basket that it would have been impossible to release it quickly. If I had had a knife—— But I hadn't. So I gesticulated at Spencer in an endeavour to explain that that was impossible, and then, since I am incurably an optimist, I thought that perhaps I shouldn't be killed after all and in that event I had now an absolutely unique opportunity of securing pictures. So I brought the camera into play and photographed the ground—the dreadfully solid-looking earth—as it seemed to rise to meet us. Trees and houses and cows and people became recognizable. I saw two children run shrieking to a cottage and a man come hurriedly out and run towards us. And then suddenly I felt a terrible jar which shook all my bones. The nose of the framework hit the ground, twisting the tubing of the propeller and burying it in the earth. Bamboo poles broke and splintered—but it was they that bore the shock of the crash, so that the basket, instead of hitting the ground like a stone, struck it comparatively gently. We were

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thrown off our feet and fell into a confusion of bamboo and tubing and pipes, with the gasbag all on top of us; but we scrambled out unhurt and suffering only from what the newspapers would now call "bruises and shock."

My camera, moreover, was unhurt. So was the film. We had failed to drop our film on Urban's building, or to provide the spectacle which his photographers were to take from the roof. But we had taken the first film from the air, we had crashed and escaped alive, and we were able to show the record of our experiences to the people of London on the following day.

CHAPTER THREE

INTRODUCTION TO AFRICA

IN 1909 I travelled from England in a small cargo-boat and reached Mombassa on the morning after a terrific storm. Everything there was very primitive—though none the less interesting to a newcomer for that—and instead of landing at a well-built quay beside the Customs House, I was put ashore in a small boat and landed on a shingle beach. Then the next day I boarded a train—at that time there were only two trains a week—and set out in hopeful curiosity for the African jungle.

Though I had already been to the Sahara, I had not at that time attempted to photograph anything that could properly be called “jungle life,” and though I had read a good many books on Africa I had—as events proved—only a very vague idea of what I should find when I got there. Of course, I pictured myself facing lions and elephants and wondered what I should do when they charged. I expected to find Africa a jungle

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of tangled trees and vines and undergrowth, through which elephants and rhinos would come crashing mightily; and though I knew that there must be open spaces where buck and gazelles in small herds would wander and browse, I thought they would be like islands in the midst of the jungle. I expected to have frequently to cut my way with a hatchet to reach them and then to set up my camera and wait till something came near enough for me to get my pictures. In a general way I was quite prepared for difficulties, though filled with confidence—born of my previous experiences—that I should be able to overcome them. But of the actual difficulties that did beset me, I had no expectation whatever. Nor was I in the least prepared for the amazing sights which surrounded me from the day when I first set foot in Africa.

My first shock came at daybreak on the first morning after I boarded the train. I awoke early and waited for daylight. Looking out of the carriage window as day dawned, instead of the expected jungle, I saw an enormous tract of open country dotted with bushes or small trees. As we advanced further up country, I thought that some of it was very like the English parkland: indeed, I could call to mind several stretches of country

which I knew at home that almost exactly resembled it.

But although in that way the view reminded me of home, there was one amazing difference. The animals! Herds of zebra hundreds strong, herds of gazelle, of buck—I was too inexperienced then to distinguish all the different varieties—several groups of giraffe, a rhino, then smaller creatures in the distance which I could see without knowing what they were. The country, as I saw it that morning from the train, simply teemed with animal life.

The next exciting discovery was that these animals were not afraid of the train: they browsed quite close to the line, and as we passed they simply raised their heads and stared. Why, I thought, there's no jungle to cut through, and the animals aren't even as shy as a group of horses in an English field! I shan't even have to stalk them: I can just go and set up my camera in the open, without a hide, and take all the photographs I want! Marvellous! What a paradise for a photographer!

And then, as the day wore on, we crossed the great Athi Plains, which are seventy miles across and covered with grass with hardly a single bush or tree. There, the animals were even more

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numerous. Herds of zebra must have been at least a thousand strong, their stripes standing out against the dull greenish-brown of the landscape and thrilling me with their possibilities for picture-making. Wildebeest, in herds nearly as big, kongoni, gazelles, and ostriches frequently strung out in a line added to the picturesqueness of the scene. Animals in their thousands—no, tens of thousands! And the train puffing among them, and yet leaving them undisturbed!

And yet when I got down to work, all that paradise seemed to fade like a mirage. Herds that would only stand and stare at a train would bound away in terror when I, alone, walked within two hundred yards of them. Mile after weary mile I tramped, yard after aching yard I crawled; I used all the skill I had in stalking, in taking cover, I built hides which in England would have crowned my efforts with success; and yet for day after day I failed to get the pictures I wanted.

I was well aware that though my hunter friends could kill at two hundred yards, I with my camera had to get within fifty yards in order to get any result that would be recognizable on the screen. And that seemed impossible. Moreover there were worse drawbacks to trying than the disheartening sense of failure: there were seeds

in the grass which got into my boots and then worked into my flesh, creating sores, and there were literally thousands of ticks—I had to scrape them off my legs with my hunting-knife. I would come back to camp in the evening, too weary and too sore even to realize my disappointment. It was not Paradise that I thought of then!

Nor did I at first find much joy in the experience of camping in Africa. To set up one's camp in the wilds and sleep there alone with Nature—it is a thing that every boy has dreamed of. I too had looked forward to it. City life, which I have never liked, would be forgotten: I would lie under the stars and listen to birds, and fall asleep at last to awake at dawn and look out on jungle scenes among which I could take the most marvellous pictures. But it wasn't like that. I didn't lie and listen to birds: I sought desperately for sleep hour after hour in the night amid a hundred uncomfortable noises—the ghastly laugh of the hyena, the cry of the jackal, the puffing of a rhinoceros. And when at last sleep came, I would be roused almost at once—roused with a quaking start by the roar of a lion. Safely in England, I had thought it would be a grand thing to hear a lion roaring in his native jungle. But the first time I heard it, the repeated and ever-

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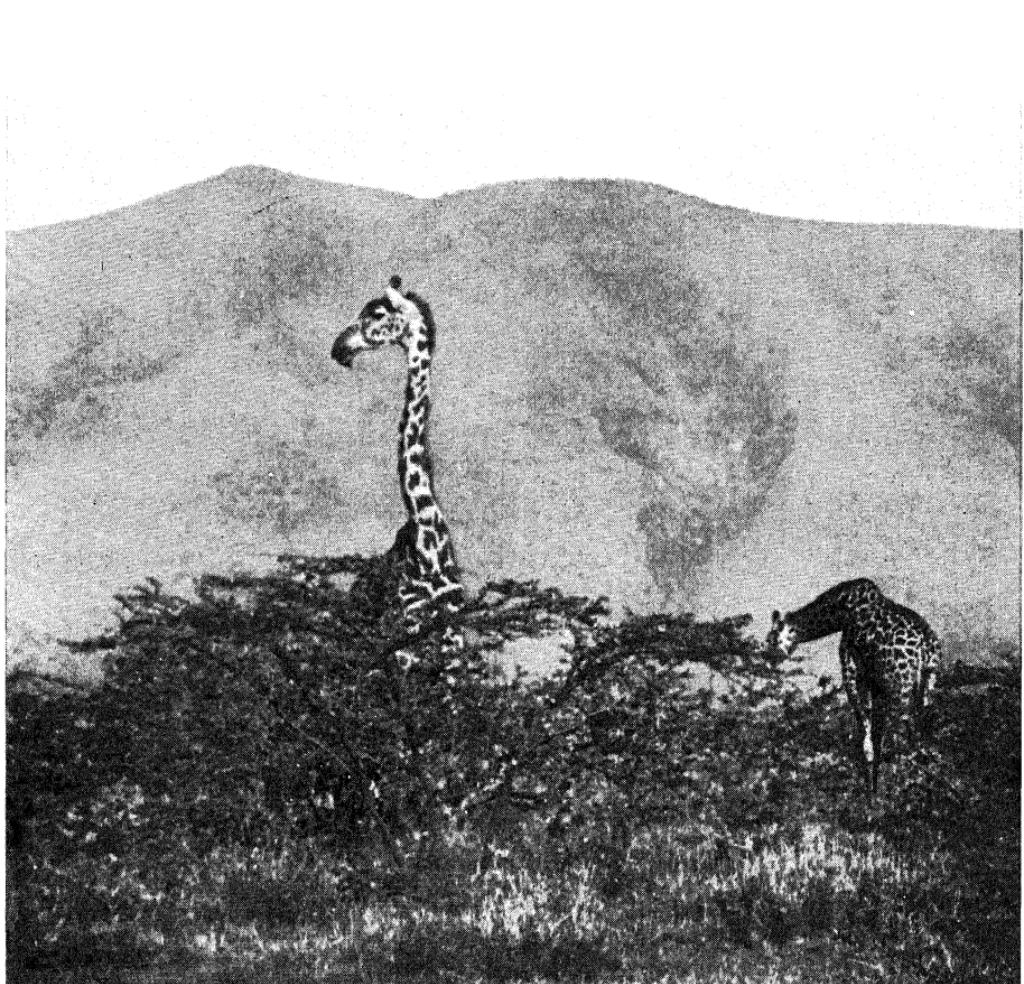
growing roar of satisfaction, swelling up and up and then slowly dying away, I did not think it grand, but only terrible. I don't know how near it was—if I had guessed then, I should probably have been wrong—but it seemed alarmingly close, and my mind was filled with a picture of a lion suddenly breaking into my camp, putting the native boys to flight and then seizing me as I hurried out of my tent. It was no pleasant thought with which to be aroused from dreams.

As usually happens, it was time that brought the cure. Even to-day, after twenty-five years, the roaring of lions is bloodcurdling and awesome to me, especially since several of my old chums have been killed by them. But I know now, fairly accurately, how far the sound has travelled before it reaches me—and usually it is a good distance. I know too, what I did not appreciate then, that only in the rarest cases will a lion attack a camp where there is a blazing fire. In fact, I can measure the danger—and consequently I can laugh at it.

That knowledge came slowly, and with it came a great deal of other knowledge about my job as an animal photographer. I learnt that stalking in Africa was quite different from stalking in England, because one animal would warn another.

At first I imagined that I could disregard a buck feeding up wind when I wanted to stalk another that was feeding down wind: but I very soon found that the one I ignored would give a warning to the one from which I was hidden. I also found that I couldn't trust my eyes. Again and again I would try to stalk giraffe—a difficult operation at the best when one is carrying a heavy cinematograph camera—and I would get behind a bush with the satisfactory feeling that I was so far undetected: then I would notice a slight movement in a thorn-tree and discover that a part of that thorn-tree was really a giraffe which harmonized so closely with it that I had never detected him—and yet he was watching me over the top of the tree so that he warned the others before I could get the camera into action.

So eventually I decided that my experience in the British Isles counted for very little in these new conditions. My old methods could not even be adapted. I considered using the ingenious kind of hides my brother and I had employed in England, but altering them to suit the locality; thus, instead of using a dummy sheep, I thought I might have a dummy zebra. But my hunting friends quickly pointed out how easy it would be for them to shoot that zebra—and me inside it;



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THE MONKEYS' DREAD (AND MINE !)



A GREY MONKEY AND HER BABY.

and they asked what, for another thing, I proposed to do if the "zebra" was stalked by a lion.

I therefore decided to content myself with simpler hides made with hollowed-out bushes with a thin lining of grass and leaves matted in front. These I planned to build beside the animals' tracks and water-holes.

But I soon found that even that was not as simple as it looked. One day I got a companion to build a screen of this sort around me, and then he went away while I remained with the idea of photographing a herd of eland as they grazed past me. When the eland came in sight, they stopped about a hundred yards away (too far for my purpose) and prepared to settle down for the heat of the day.

While I was wondering what to do, I happened to glance up. And there, only a few feet from my head, I saw a huge python. It was lying in the thorn-bush which formed part of my shelter, and was gazing at me with what I suppose was astonishment, turning its head this way and that to get a better view.

I didn't wait an instant. I had a rifle beside me and, seizing it, I put a bullet clean through the python's head.

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But snakes are not killed easily. This one lashed out even after it was dead—I suppose it is a sort of reflex action—and as I leapt out of my shelter it very nearly struck me. Then my companion and some natives came running up, having heard the shot. We chopped away some of the branches with the idea of uncoiling the python from the tree and eventually succeeded in loosening some eight feet of it—and then suddenly the great dead snake contracted itself and twisted round my companion, pinning him against the tree!

That incident gave me a dislike of hides in Africa. Later I discovered other difficulties. One of them was that when you are shut in a hide with only a small peep-hole through which to peer at the outside world, you lose all sense of proportion. You cannot compare the sizes of things and if all you can see is a leaf with a fly on it, before many minutes have passed you will find it impossible to realize that that fly is not almost as big as an elephant. This creates a sense of unreality which is soon followed by a loss of balance. If your hide is quite securely fixed on the ground, well and good; but if it shows any tendency to wobble, your efforts to steady yourself will almost invariably make matters worse.

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I had discovered this in England, but I was very forcibly reminded of it very soon after I started work in Africa, when I left the plains and went to photograph waterfowl on Lake Naivasha. I got a small boat and covered the bows of it with canvas and the middle with reeds, leaving only small peep-holes for my eyes and the lens of my camera. I paddled the boat until its nose rested in a small isolated clump of reeds, and then I crawled forward with my camera under the canvas covering. I got everything into position and crouched as comfortably as I could, expecting a long wait. Through the peep-hole I could see a few stems of reeds and a small stretch of water between them. At this I stared, losing all sense of proportion while the reeds seemed to become as large as great trees. Then I shifted my position and of course in doing so I rocked the boat. In the ordinary way I could have steadied it easily; but under that covering I pressed the wrong way at each movement of the boat—and suddenly the whole thing turned turtle.

How I escaped being drowned I do not know: but somehow or other I managed by good luck to get out of my "hide" and into the open water; and then I swam ashore, not appreciably worse for the adventure but quite convinced that a

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closed-in boat was not the proper place from which to photograph birds.

I then had a giant chair built—rather like a baby's chair, but with very long legs. I laid this on a platform built across two boats, and then I had it lowered into the water some fifty yards from the shore. I fixed reeds carefully round it and after I had taken my seat—with my feet just touching the water—my native boys fastened more reeds all round me until I was completely hidden in an artificial clump that appeared to rise out of the lake. Knowing that I had to be hidden from birds in the air as well as from those on the water, I had the erection covered at the top as well as at the sides, so that I was closely boxed in.

Then my boys left me, with instructions not to come back till four hours later.

Very soon the birds made their appearance—Egyptian geese, lily trotters, ibis, herons, storks, moorhens and bittern. It was a marvellous sight. Some were suspicious, but others settled calmly on reeds close in front of my camera and for a long time I was much too busy to think about my curious position . . . which was perhaps as well, for it certainly had its dangers. There were hippo in that part of the lake, and, of course, if a hippo

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had collided—either intentionally or otherwise—with the chair, I should have been upset. And in the midst of that box of reeds, with growing reeds and weeds all round me, I should have had little chance of swimming.

My success with this form of hide-up, led me to devise others. And as my knowledge of African conditions increased, success came with it. On an island in the lake I secured excellent pictures of cormorants and the sacred ibis, and then, with mounting confidence, I went in search of hippo.

In those first efforts after this monster creature I was not particularly successful, but I did a great deal better when I left the lake and went to the Tana River. Yet even that success was not of the kind which would thrill the majority of lovers of sport. For the first nine days I did not get a single opportunity of taking a photograph. I used to walk cautiously down to the river bank, becoming aware as I approached it that there were large numbers of hippo basking on the rocks in the middle of a big pool. But, however cautious I was, I was always discovered, and then there would be nothing to be seen except a few moving pairs of nostrils and now and again some smooth dark skin like a tiny island, which

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would rise above the surface and quickly disappear.

I would get into my hide and sit there, all eager for my pictures, despite the active attention of mosquitoes and flies and ants—despite also the fact that a number of buffalo lived in some dense bush near to the river and occasionally appeared to be unpleasantly close to me. All that time there was the faintest of breezes—so slight that for some days I was unaware of it—blowing my scent straight to the hippo, and it was only on the tenth day, when the wind changed, that I achieved success. But what a success I had then! The hippo no longer paid any attention to me. Not one of them had any idea that I was there and as, on that tenth morning, I crept down to the bank, I was amazed to see about fourteen of the creatures playing in the water, basking in the sunlight, and occasionally diving but always reappearing, within easy range of my camera.

I knew that up to that time no one else had ever succeeded in taking such cinematograph pictures. There were hippo and crocodiles basking together in a sort of mixed family group. There were water-tortoises nestling close to the crocodiles' jaws. There were birds waiting to pick parasites out of the crocodiles' teeth. I felt

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then that for all the trouble I had had during my first three months in Africa, I was amply repaid.

My first exciting adventure in Africa—apart from such minor matters as nearly being drowned in the lake—had come a few weeks earlier. After some months I had joined forces with an American naturalist, Mr. James L. Clark, who with his guns was out to secure specimens for the New York Natural History Museum. We were in the heart of the lion country—one troop of fifteen lions was said to be roaming quite close to us—and consequently I was carrying a rifle. Clark also had his rifle, and we had with us two of the Masai, armed with spears, and a boy to carry my camera.

The boy with the camera was leading—at least, he was leading at one minute, and the next, the point at which this story really begins, he was away behind us, running for all he was worth. The Masai started running, too; and so did Clark and I. We weren't sure what we were running from, but we were in an open stretch of country with no possible protection from danger except a single tree forty yards away, and we all ran

towards that. Then, as we stopped, panting, and turned, the danger was apparent: two great rhinos were charging straight at us.

The Masai stood ready with their spears—and I must say here that those two men were a credit to their brave race: they stood their ground and when the affair was over we found that their spears were actually twisted with the weight of the impact as the animals charged home. Meanwhile, Clark and I stopped and knelt. I waited for Clark to fire first as he had a big game licence and I had not. By that time the rhinos were within a dozen yards of us. Clark's rifle jammed, or misfired, and he cried out to me. I fired at one of the creatures which was coming straight at me: I had a momentary vision of the great horn apparently right on top of me as I knelt, and then the animal collapsed within inches of my knee.

I scrambled to my feet and looked for the other rhino. A cloud of dust covered everything and I did not know what had happened. Suddenly I ran round to the other side of the tree: I have no idea what prompted me to do so, but I did it, and quickly found the second rhino. Or, perhaps it would be more exact to say that he found me. At any rate, we met—shoulder against shoulder, with great violence. And as a rhino's weight,

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on the average, is about three tons, it may be guessed that it was I that was knocked over.

Of course, I was fortunate. If I had been a few inches to one side, I should have been struck by the rhino's horn and undoubtedly killed: whereas I escaped with only a few bruises. And the surprise of our impact so startled the great creature that he immediately turned and galloped away as fast as he could, leaving us beside the dead body of his mate.

The other great adventure of this trip was my first meeting, in the open bush, with lions. I had always looked forward to that, and we had tramped miles, following reports of the animals' presence, only to find, again and again, that the news had been false, or else that the animals had moved off from where they had been seen. When the roaring of lions disturbed our slumbers, we would be up early in search of them. When we heard of the troop of fifteen which I have referred to above, we followed them all day without success. Then some Masai told us of seven others, and we actually found their spoor which looked so fresh that I did not think they could

have been more than a quarter of a mile away; yet we could not find them.

Then, when Clark and I were out with Mr. Harold Hill, a settler, we came to a low kopje covered with rocks and low bush, where it was said that several lions were in residence.

It was a little round hill, perhaps three hundred feet high and half a mile across. On one side of it was ordinary bush country consisting of short, half-dried grass and occasional low thorn-bushes, either in clumps of three or four, or else singly: on the other were the open Athi plains. All the "cover" was on the hill—that is to say, in the lions' territory—and we had to camp at some distance and make daily journeys to the foot of the hill. When we arrived, early in the morning, we started to stalk the lions which we faithfully imagined to be lying hidden among the boulders. I carried my camera, weighing nearly seventy pounds, on my shoulders, and the business of creeping forward with every precaution against noise, now clambering over high boulders, now stealing forward to examine a patch of longish grass, now stopping to search a likely spot where two rocks inclined to make a cave—well, it was no light work under the tropical sun of Africa. In addition to that, there was the constant excite-

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ment of knowing that at any moment we might see a tawny glint of skin—it might be merely crouching, or even sleeping, but equally it might be stalking us while we stalked it.

In the course of a week, we covered every foot of the hill and were convinced that we had looked behind every single rock. And yet there was no sight of a lion. I don't suppose we should have stuck it so long but for Hill who, as the "local authority" was regarded as a reliable witness when he insisted that he had himself seen three lions on this kopje only a short time before. In any case we were all relieved when, on the eighth morning, someone suggested that we should give ourselves a holiday from the kopje and go and search a neighbouring patch of bush. The idea was that we should collect a number of natives and get them to "beat" through the bush so that if any lions were there they would be driven out past my camera.

I think the "beaters" enjoyed the day. They furnished themselves with drums and old tin cans and made a glorious noise as they advanced in a long line into the bush. But it wasn't so much fun for the rest of us. Clark superintended the work of the natives; Hill sat on his horse, ready to decoy any lion that came out so that it should

gallop past the camera; and I crouched behind a large ant-hill (protected by a single Masai spearman) and waited for whatever might come. Of course, whilst waiting at the beginning of the drive, I was busy with the reflection that the lion (or lions) might not carry out the programme quite as we had arranged it—or they might think me preferable to the horse. But as the morning wore on, I lost these thoughts in an access of sheer boredom. For nothing happened whatsoever. There were no lions after all in that patch of bush, and Hill sat idly on his horse while I crouched equally idly behind my ant-hill, under the blazing sun, waiting and waiting for what didn't happen.

The next day we returned to the kopje. I must confess that by that time I no longer viewed that little hill with much affection or any great hopefulness, and when the usual weary search began —Hill coming with me on to the slope, while Clark with Hill's nephew examined the ground at the base of the hill—I looked more at the open plain below and some clumps of bush than at the kopje itself. But suddenly the "boy" beside me attracted my attention and I turned to see him pointing to a spot at the very base of the hill. And there, only a hundred yards away, stood a lioness and two full-grown cubs.

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To me, it was an amazing sight. It was for this, more than for anything else, that I had come to Africa. Till that moment I had never seen these glorious creatures outside the cages of a zoo; and here they were, "as large as life and twice as natural," in the open country, their own country, with nothing but a slope of bare, rocky ground between me and them. The wind blew in my face, so that it did not carry my scent to the lions. And they had not yet seen me, so that they were entirely unaware of the presence of man, showing no fear or suspicion and merely standing quietly in the shade of a tree.

In an instant I trained my camera on them, forgetful of everything but the thrill of the moment and my anxiety to secure my pictures. If only the animals would come a little closer!

My sudden movement drew Hill's attention also—and at that moment we realized that Clark and Hill's nephew had as yet no suspicion of the lions' presence, although they were only twenty yards from them, on the further side of a thicket of bush. If the lions came round that thicket before we warned our friends, tragedy might follow, for two men have but little chance against three lions when they are surprised at such a short distance. So Hill shouted: "Lions—Shout!" his

idea being that if they were to shout suddenly and loudly the lions would bolt in the opposite direction, and that that would bring them nicely into the range of my camera. But unfortunately Hill's voice, coming against the wind, did not come clearly, and Clark only heard a word which he thought was "Shoot!" Seeing nothing and not knowing what he was meant to fire at, nor what was the danger, he drew his revolver and fired a couple of shots into the ground: I suppose he thought that the sound of firing would scare whatever was supposed to be in hiding.

But lions do not always react to the sound of shots as they do to shouting. The human voice can scare them, but thanks to past efforts of the lion-hunters, they generally regard shots as an immediate challenge, a sign of danger, an invitation to defend themselves by charging.

At the sound of the revolver shots, therefore, the lioness and the two lions turned suddenly and with every appearance of stealth, but yet with great rapidity, began to steal round the edge of the thicket towards the place where our two friends were standing; while they, still unaware of what all our excitement was about, stood looking around on every side, trying to make out what was the danger and from which direction it was

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likely to come. Then we saw Clark sign to Hill's nephew to follow him, and begin to move cautiously forward, along the edge of the thicket. And we knew that in another minute he and the leading lion would come abruptly face to face—with nothing between them but about ten yards of open ground.

Ten yards is no protection from a lion. Clark might have had time to throw his rifle forward as a protection to his chest as the lion sprang, but his chances of killing it would have been practically nil; and even then there would have been the two others to be dealt with an instant later. While if he had tried to run, the nearest lion would undoubtedly have overtaken him within a few seconds.

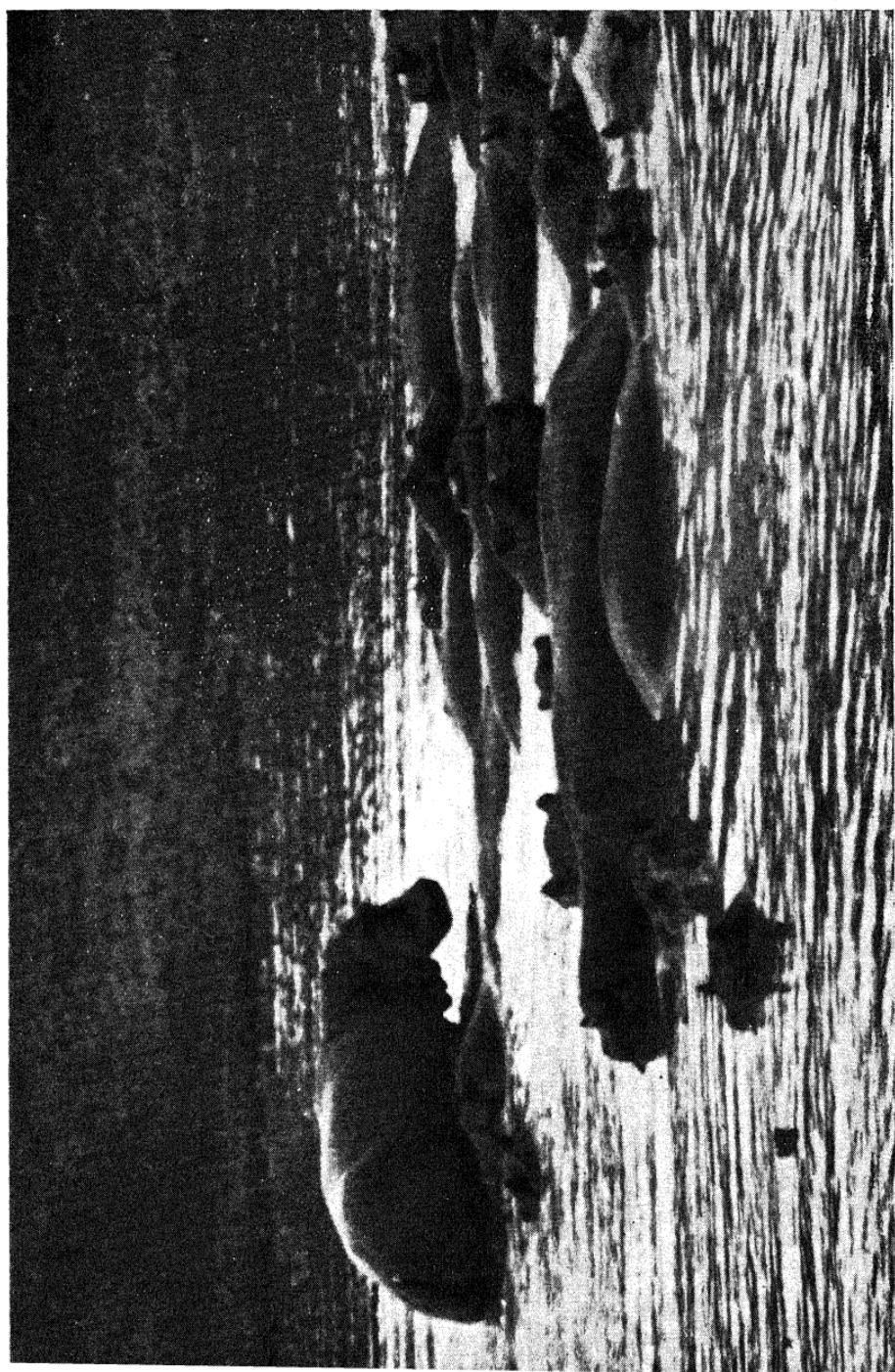
But, of course, I did not think of these things then. Instead, I acted on the instinct which suspends thought when a friend is in danger, and I yelled: "Lions—Shout! Shout!"

Perhaps my lung-power was stronger than Hill's. In any case, this time the words were heard and understood, so that both men began shouting as loudly as they could; and then, after creeping cautiously backwards, with rifles at the ready, till another corner of the thicket was between them and the lions, they both raced at

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top speed to the shelter of a giant ant-hill, some ten feet high, which stood at a little distance.

That shouting disturbed the lions. It came down wind to them, a confused medley of sound and something quite strange on the African bush, so that they were puzzled and for a second they stood hesitating. Then they turned and made their way cautiously between short bushes to a group of rocks on the hill. And as they went, they passed within thirty yards of my camera, so that triumph came to me after nine days of disappointment, and I secured the first moving pictures ever taken of lions in their native haunts.



NOT ONE OF THEM HAD ANY IDEA THAT I WAS THERE.



STUDIES IN APPARENT GENTLENESS.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEODORE ROOSEVELT—AND A LION HUNT

I DO not think Theodore Roosevelt is remembered to-day in this country, nearly as well as he deserves to be: he was a man of outstanding character, scrupulously honest and honourable, and possessed of a great hatred of shams in every form. Truth was everything to him, and because he knew much about wild life he hated in particular to see false representations of it made by photographers: he insisted that the faking of nature films for the sake of excitement was as unnecessary as it was undesirable, and incidentally he was one of the first to realize that the interest of authentic wild-life pictures was so great that the taking and presentation of them was bound to mean a big popular success.

In 1908, during his presidency, he heard of the success my brother and I had attained in filming natural history and invited us to show our films at the White House; and subsequently my brother went over and stayed with him for a week and laid the foundations of a friendship that lasted

till the president's death. He sent me a signed photograph of himself and for some time we corresponded. He was always extraordinarily kind and helpful and encouraging to me, and I came to admire him greatly. Very much of my success I owe to him, as he was a great incentive to me and for his help I shall always be grateful.

When in 1908 I heard that he thought of making a trip to Africa at the end of his presidency, I recalled several talks he had had with my brother in Washington, when it had been suggested that Africa would present a field for animal photography which could not be equalled anywhere in the world; and I was fired with the idea that I should go there at the same time as he did, meet him and perhaps even join him in the bush.

So was planned my first expedition to Central Africa, which quickly filled me with a love for that glorious country and led me to prefer it to all other parts of the world as a setting for animal photography. There my outlook was broadened by new sights and many adventures—a few of the first of which I have described in the previous chapter: there too I met many men with similar tastes to my own and made friendships which have lasted me through life.

It was only a few days after I landed that I met

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Blaney Percival, the game warden, with whom I travelled to Nairobi, where I met Sir Frederick Jackson, the Governor of Kenya. Both of these men were very great naturalists, and lovers of wild life; and both have done much to spread knowledge of the natural history of Kenya.

At Nairobi I also met another great sportsman, Sir Northup MacMillan, and it was in his house that I found Roosevelt. He was as genial and kindly tempered as ever and he gave me a great welcome to Africa. He had arrived only a few days before and was busy making his final preparations for the safari that would take him through the heart of the continent.

Roosevelt had an objection to being photographed while he was in Africa. Several film companies and newspapers (both American and English) had wanted to send photographers with his expedition, but he had refused to allow that, saying that he wanted all the photographs on his expedition to be taken by his son Kermet, and that during his presidency he had received all the "publicity" he wanted—now he had earned a holiday and a rest.

When he left Nairobi on his way to Mount Kenia, I went with several others to the station to see him off. While we waited for the train he took

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my arm and as we walked up and down the platform, he asked if there was anything he could do to help me. "Yes," I said. "You can let me take a few feet of film of you when you get to work."

I hadn't much hope that he would agree; and I was accordingly all the more delighted when after a moment's hesitation he said: "All right. I will do that for you, Kearton, because you have done so much for natural history."

We then discussed the matter with Sir Frederick Jackson, and it was agreed that a big *ingoma* (native war dance) should be arranged, and that I should take cinematograph pictures of it and at the same time of Roosevelt watching it.

Of course that was exactly what I wanted. The ex-president of the United States of America at a war dance of African natives—what better subject could possibly be sought in those days when successful "news films" were infinitely more unusual than they are to-day!

It was at Nyeri (under Mount Kenia) several days later, that the opportunity arose. The *ingoma* was a grand sight, startling and awe-inspiring. No less than two thousand natives took part, dancing to the wild music of drums in a clearing of the bush. The warriors, in fantastic

head-dresses and carrying spears and gaily-painted shields, formed shoulder to shoulder in a huge circle, dancing backwards and forwards and round and round. All the while, they chanted dirges and jangled bells which were tied to their knees, and over all there came the steady, monotonous beating of the drums. Again and again spears were thrust forward as at some imaginary enemy, the warriors crouched on the ground and then sprang forward in a wild charge, checked themselves, began again to dance, shuffling their feet and swaying their bodies; then, without any recognizable word of command except a slight change in the rhythm of the music, they turned and went forward in a great snake-like line, round and round in a never-ending circle; and then another change of rhythm and once again the dancers became an army, charging in frenzy, checking, retreating, charging again with a shout of war-cries.

It was exciting for us, the spectators, but far more so for the natives, who seemed to lose all control of themselves as the dance progressed—indeed, two of them actually went mad and broke from the line, charging suddenly forward as if they thought that they faced a real enemy in the shape of myself, my camera, and the little group

of men around me. As I moved my camera, I suddenly caught sight of these two warriors charging straight at me, yelling at the top of their voices and with spears upraised: and although I was in time to get a few feet of really excellent film, I felt quite glad when they were seized and disarmed.

Thrilling as this was, I did not forget the original purpose of the dance and I got some interesting pictures of Roosevelt as he stood watching with an expression on his face which made me wonder whether he was comparing it in his mind with the scenes he must often have witnessed at American presidential elections.

Roosevelt certainly made no attempt to "pose" while I was taking the pictures: I imagine his natural modesty would have prevented such an idea from occurring to him. And yet I got the impression that he was anxious that the photographs should not show him in any undignified position. For him to be shown watching a great spectacle arranged in his honour—that was fitting for a man who a few months before had been a president. But a few minutes later he began to chase away some native boys who were obstructing my vision, running about the ground in a way that was certainly much more comic than

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dignified; and when he realized that that scene also was recorded by my camera, he was aghast at the thought that those pictures might appear on the screen. However, I gave him my promise that that particular scene, interesting as it was, should never be published, and he once again became the calm and beaming person that he normally was.

After that, Roosevelt and I trekked together and camped together for several days. He fired my imagination with his certainty about what could be done with the cinematograph in the world of animal photography, and often after talking with him I would lie awake for hours at night, dreaming of the pictures I would take, the countries I would visit, and of how I would eventually photograph every wild creature looking perfectly undisturbed in its natural surroundings.

One night, as we sat together in his tent after dinner, Roosevelt told me about an exciting adventure which had befallen him a few days before. He had been out with a famous white hunter named Dick Cunningham and a party of Ndorobo trackers, seeking elephants in very dense forest on the slope of Mount Kenia. The Ndorobo (a wandering tribe) were very skilful at tracking and would creep forward

through the thickest country without a sound, while every now and again one of them would scramble up a tall tree, just like a monkey, peer ahead, slide down again, convey by signs information of what he had seen, and then the whole party would once more move silently forward.

In this way they soon found themselves in the heart of the forest, when the leader of the Ndotobo indicated that the elephants were very close. Amid tense excitement Roosevelt and Cunningham crept forward, and then suddenly they heard the breaking of branches and a little later the deep internal rumblings by which experienced hunters and photographers can always tell that they are close to a big herd of elephants.

The sounds showed that the herd was at a short distance to the right of Roosevelt's party and the men moved round in order to approach up wind. Suddenly, they saw something more solid than leaves among the trees, and they realized just in time that one elephant was standing apart from the rest of the herd and right in their path.

This elephant was standing quite still: it was probably suspicious and was listening. But its suspicions remained unconfirmed, even when some birds flew up in alarm; and meanwhile the sounds from the main herd showed that they were

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still quite unconcerned. Colonel Roosevelt's party, therefore, waited to see what would happen, hoping that the single elephant would move so that they could see it more clearly—for in elephant-shooting it is the first shot on which everything depends, and since the brain, which is the vital spot, is so small, it is overwhelmingly important that the marksman should make sure of his aim and kill instead of wounding.

Suddenly the elephant turned its head as if to look straight at Roosevelt and since delay would then have added to the danger, the Colonel instantly fired. That first shot stunned the animal and a second brought him down. But then, even as Cunningham and the Colonel were congratulating themselves on a successful piece of shooting, a second elephant—a huge creature—screaming wildly, came charging out of the bushes near where they stood: apparently all the while, this animal had been close to them completely hidden in the thickness of the forest. Roosevelt's rifle was empty and he had no chance to reload. He bolted behind a tree and the elephant charged past, so close as almost to touch him. Cunningham, who was a few paces in the rear, fired two unsuccessful shots and then threw himself into the bushes.

If the animal had turned quickly and charged again I think it would have been bound to have got one or other of them. But fortunately, it didn't: it went off at once in the opposite direction, trumpeting angrily as it went and leaving Roosevelt and Dick Cunningham safe with the body of the elephant which Roosevelt had killed.

There were two man-eating lions in that district which used to carry off and devour Masai women and we got news that the tribesmen were planning a great lion hunt to rid themselves of the pests. I had heard of the way in which these warriors fought the lions with no weapons but their spears, and I was very keen to see and photograph such an expedition; but, unfortunately, I could not linger then. I made up my mind, therefore, to finish my present trip, make what money I could from my pictures in New York and then return to Africa with the getting of such a picture as my main objective. Within a year, in 1910, I had done this. The cinematograph films which I secured of the lion hunt are absolutely unique, and must remain so, for very shortly afterwards the Masai were disarmed by the government: my films show one of the very last real, native

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hunts of man-eating lions in Central African history. Incidentally, I am the only white man who has ever accompanied the Masai in a fight, without carrying a weapon.

Included in my expedition after man-eaters were four Somali horsemen whom I planned to use for rounding up the lions. I also had with me a black and white fox-terrier bitch, named Pip, who was destined to play an important part in this lion hunt.

When we reached a Masai kraal, I was told that the lions were not far away and I accordingly sent the Somalis out as scouts. Before long they returned with the news that they had found a large lion and a lioness under a big thorn-tree only five hundred yards away. Eleven young Masai warriors set out, scantily attired in skin skirts, armlets, and lion-skin head-dresses which denoted that each of them had already fought and killed a lion. Each carried a spear, some seven feet long, a short sword and a gaily-coloured shield: and their appearance suggested that this would be a grim struggle between the teeth and claws of the lions and the spears, swords and shields of the men.

The warriors advanced in a crescent-shaped line, with myself on the extreme left. I had left

Pip behind, thinking that a lion hunt was no place for a small dog: but to my consternation I now found that she had broken loose and overtaken me. I couldn't allow her to run into danger so I told my camera-bearer to take charge of her and to remain at a distance.

By that time we were within eighty yards of the two lions, and still the warriors advanced, until we could see the animals standing at bay, only twenty-five yards from us, under a large thorn-tree and with their backs to a clump of bushes. I set up my cinematograph camera on its tripod, and then the Masai again advanced slowly with their spears raised. As they came on, they taunted the lions, calling them cowards for killing women: and the lions, tearing at the earth with their fore-paws, coughed and growled in furious anger—a terrible sound which seemed to me to be hitting me in the chest and vibrating out at my back.

The Somalis, anxious to take a part in the adventure, remained on their horses, and now one of them pressed forward on the left so close that the lioness suddenly bounded out at him, missing him almost by inches. He owed his life to the fleetness of his horse. Then the lioness, seizing her chance, bounded away before the ring

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of men could finally close in, and escaped; but the lion still stood, growling and snarling against the Masai.

The lion then made one effort to escape, but he seemed uncertain whether it was wisest to try to get away or to stay where he was with his back to the wall—or rather to the clump of bushes: and eventually he made his way into the heart of those spiked bushes, which became for him a fortress into which the Masai found it impossible to enter. There he stood, coughing terribly—it is said that the lion uses these coughs to terrify his enemies, and I can well believe that they succeed.

Finally, while the Masai warriors were creeping closer and manœuvring for positions from which they could use their spears—it must be remembered that each man had one spear only and if he threw it and missed he was left with no weapon but a short sword, which could only be used in very close fighting—the lion suddenly changed his tactics and leapt away from the bushes in the direction of the dry and bush-covered bed of a dried up stream, some eighty yards away. This movement was so sudden and unexpected that none of the warriors was swift enough to intercept him and for the moment the attack failed while the men quickly set off in pursuit.

ADVENTURES WITH ANIMALS AND MEN

Suddenly I realized that the way the lion was going would take him close to my camera-bearer and Pip. Was he completely terrified and anxious only to escape, or would he stop to pounce on them as he passed?

The little terrier went mad with excitement. For some minutes she had been occupying all the boy's attention, straining at the leash, yapping and trying to break away and join in the fight against these great animals whose coughing growls and snarls must have stirred all her fighting and hunting instincts. Now, as the lion passed close—but fortunately without turning aside—Pip snapped suddenly, not at the lion, which was out of her reach, but at the unfortunate camera-boy, who was trying to restrain her—and bit him in the leg!

An effort was made to drive the lion out of the very difficult cover in which he was sheltering, much shouting being done and many stones being thrown. But the lion did not respond: he remained silent, hidden in the bushes of a winding, dried-up river-bed fifteen or twenty yards across, so that the Masai were at a loss to know exactly where he was, while all the time it was clear that at any moment he might spring out at them from some unexpected quarter. To

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attempt to penetrate a thick clump of bushes in search of an angry lion which you can't see, is the height of foolhardiness—it being almost certain that the lion will spring from cover before it is discovered: the only thing to do is to locate the animal and then make a concerted attack on it from all sides so that someone will be able to spear it from the side or rear while its attention is concentrated on those enemies whom it sees in front of it. As the Masai appeared nonplussed by the position, it occurred to me that if I was to let Pip loose, the little terrier would rush to the edge of the bushes and stand barking at the lion; that then the lion would come out to attack her and fall straight into the hands of the warriors, while the little dog would naturally retreat to safety before the lion's attack.

The Masai welcomed this proposal and assured me that no harm could possibly come to the dog, as their spears would be cast straight into the lion's back the instant it showed itself.

So I told the camera-bearer to let Pip loose—and almost instantly, though now too late, I realized how mistaken had been all my reasoning. For Pip did not stand on the edge of the clump of bushes and bark at the lion: she dashed right into the heart of the undergrowth, straight at the lion,

and was lost from our sight. There came at once a terrific roaring and in the midst of it a little excited yapping: then complete silence.

Pip, as I discovered afterwards, had rushed straight at the lion. I suppose at first she was rather checked by the size of the animal—to say nothing of the sound of his roaring at close quarters—and the difficulty of attacking him, but then she must have seen the lion's tail lashing angrily from side to side and because that was smaller than the rest of him, she leapt upon it and fastened her teeth in it. At any rate, that is what happened: Pip bit at the end of the lion's tail and hung on to it. Her first yapping and the lion's renewed roaring showed exactly where the creature was hiding, and the nearest warrior threw his spear and then plunged right in among the bushes—to find that his spear had pierced the lion's heart.

It was a noble fight, and all the more so because the two sides were not too unevenly matched. It was never a foregone conclusion that the lion would be killed, and certainly at several moments it seemed highly probable that one or more of the warriors would fall victim to the animal's teeth and claws; indeed, it was a rare thing for such a lion hunt to be completed without several human

THE LION HUNT.





THE ANGRY LION-CUB—"COME NO CLOSER!"

THEODORE ROOSEVELT—AND A LION HUNT

casualties. That nothing of the sort happened on this occasion—indeed, the only human blood that fell came from the hand of a Masai while he was attempting to persuade Pip to let go of the dead lion's tail—was mainly due to the courage and rashness of my little dog.

CHAPTER FIVE

EAST AND WEST

WHEN I returned in 1910 from my first visit to Central Africa, I felt that the world was at my feet.

I was thirty-nine years old, in the heart of that epoch in a man's life which has been called "the age of accomplishment." I was fit and ambitious and, as I could not help knowing, completely the master of my job. I felt that I had exhausted most of the possibilities of nature photography in the British Isles, and now I had returned from an eminently successful trip in which I had photographed lions, elephants, leopards and crocodiles, and in which, incidentally, I had discovered that wild-animal photography was easily the most thrilling and enjoyable sport imaginable.

I meant to go again to Africa. It has often been remarked how that continent grips one more powerfully than any other and calls one to visit it again and again. I felt that call—but I felt also the call to go elsewhere. Before I went back to Africa, I decided, I would explore the whole

world. After the lions, I would photograph tigers; after buffalo, bisons and bears. I would compare the elephant in Africa with his cousin in India, and the African buffalo with the American variety and again with that in Borneo. I would go east to India and west to Canada and America; and one day I would go to Australia and photograph the kangaroo, the emu, and the wallaby.

So it came about that in 1911 I went to India and Borneo.

I found that animal photography in India was very different from the same work in Africa. Whereas in Africa I had had to travel on foot, building hides and having at all times no protection from danger (save when a Masai spearman guarded me) except my own fleetness of foot and my nimbleness in climbing trees, I found in India that I could travel through the forests on an elephant—and that as long as I did not leave that animal's back I was in a position of comparative safety. On the other hand, the country in India was much more difficult: there were not the big stretches of open bush to which I was accustomed, but everywhere great forests, with tangled under-growth which to a man on foot—especially if

burdened with a heavy cinematograph camera—would often have proved practically impassible. So I took advantage of the offer of a particularly docile and intelligent elephant, and went into those forests.

My first idea was to get photographs of Indian elephants which I could compare with those of Africa. I thought this should prove easy, for, mounted on an elephant myself, I should surely have no difficulty in making my way even into the centre of a herd—naturally, I thought, they will not be unduly suspicious of one of their own species. But when I suggested that to one of the game rangers, he said that it would be equivalent to suicide; the wild elephants would not tolerate the presence of one that had accepted the yoke of servitude and would charge it immediately and kill it—and what chance should I have, while the animal under me was being gored and crushed to death?

I regretted that decision—at first. I felt that I would have liked to test the matter. I could openly have approached the wild elephants and if they had shown signs of hostility, I could surely have driven my elephant to safety with time to spare? But before I had been long in the Indian forests, I completely changed my mind,

for I had the experience of seeing—and very nearly being overwhelmed by—a charging herd of wild elephants; and then I knew how hopeless any attempt at escape would have been.

On this occasion I was not seeking elephants, but was hidden in a tree, waiting for what might pass in the night. I had taken flashlight photographs of some small animals, and was buoying myself up in the long night hours with the thought that at any moment a tiger might appear. And then, instead of that, came a storm.

Spending the night on a very small platform in a tree in the heart of a great forest, is always exciting—or terrifying, according to your point of view. I know nowhere where there is such a sense of loneliness; and that feeling remains although one is surrounded by the noise of scared monkeys, the quarrelling and crying of small, wild animals on the ground, and all the noises which make up what is usually termed “the quietness of the night.” The only feeling I can think of which is comparable to it is that of lying face downwards on a lonely outpost in an exposed position in wartime: when one is completely alone but momentarily safe amid surrounding dangers, with the knowledge that all the quiescent dangers will come acutely into activity if one moves a foot from

one's small haven of safety. While I stayed in my tree, I was safe. But if I left it, I would be at once surrounded by a thousand dangers and the loneliness which was at present only a sensation would become a vivid reality.

But I wanted very much to leave my tree when the storm came. The crashing of thunder, the sudden illumination of a nearby tree, the momentary sight of a colony of monkeys quivering with fear on a branch, the sound of distant crashing as larger animals raced blindly from their fears—all these things accentuated the knowledge that I was utterly alone and as helpless as one always is in these great cannonades of Nature.

Fortunately for myself, I conquered the feeling and remained where I was—in spite of being wet through. For suddenly the sound of crashing grew louder and I realized that not one large animal, but a great herd was stampeding straight towards me. And then they came. Some thirty elephants, insane with fear, moving at an unrealizable speed, breaking branches, snapping the stems of trees, leaving a new path behind them across the forest. It was like a charge of the giants' cavalry, or of Hannibal's great army. For a moment in the flicker of the lightning I saw only vague shapes across the gaps between trees.

Then a tree snapped and the jungle suddenly parted as the tree-trunk bent over and fell with a crash. Within a second, an elephant passed over it as it lay on the ground, and then for several seconds the gap was constantly filled while the monsters tore through.

I had hardly time to wonder what would be my fate if the tree in which I was hidden suffered the same fate. The elephants came on both sides of me, and long before I could act I was surrounded. By good fortune my tree remained untouched. One elephant actually passed under the tree to which my platform was tied, but it only grazed it and made the platform shiver. Then, in another minute, the herd had passed, and when morning came I saw that it had left a wide lane of fallen trees, broken branches and trampled undergrowth.

After that I was very careful about elephants—even more so than I had been in Africa, where at least the wind generally blows in one direction, whereas in India it is so variable that I had constantly to use a dust-bag.

Once, in the early morning, I heard the sound of breaking branches ahead and knew that I was close to at least one elephant. So I left my own beast and carefully crept forward with a native

tracker to see whether I could secure the photographs I so badly wanted. I found two huge elephants in a clearing where the light was very indifferent. The animals were being quite as cautious as I was: while tearing down branches of leaves from the trees, they would continually stop to listen with obvious suspicion or hold out their trunks, "feeling" for a scent.

That would not have been a pleasant spot in which to be caught, for there were no large trees—only clumps of giant bamboos which would have been hurled down by the elephants with ease. So I beat a cautious retreat.

The native carriers very pluckily volunteered to work round to the far side of the elephants, disturb them by shouting, and try to drive them past me. But that, I decided, was much too risky. You cannot be sure just where disturbed elephants will go: they may let themselves be driven, or they may decide to investigate the disturbance. And even if these two great tuskers had not charged the natives they might very likely have blundered into me.

So I climbed again on to the tame elephant and urged the animal very quietly forward—not with the idea of trespassing among her wild brethren, but in order to get close enough for photography.

My elephant was an intelligent creature and she seemed to understand what was expected of her. She moved forward inch my inch, with amazing softness, carefully moving out of the way of branches that might either have cracked noisily or have swept me off her back, and we did actually get within sixty yards without causing any trouble. But, unfortunately, the two elephants were still very suspicious and alert and I realized—it is probably fortunate that I did—that I was taking too great a risk with the elephant beneath me, which was not mine but of which I had already grown fond. So I let the chance go and returned disappointed to camp.

There was one other adventure with elephants, though I did not myself participate in it. Indeed, I did not know that anything exciting had occurred: all I did know was that my party of trackers mysteriously disappeared and did not return all night. In the morning I set out in search of them. I found them all, in the dawn, climbing down from trees. They had taken a short cut, the night before, through a dense patch of jungle. So dense was the forest that they had been unable to see more than a few yards ahead and suddenly they realized that they had walked into the centre of a herd of elephants. The two

parties to the adventure, the elephants and the men, became aware of each others' presence at the same moment; and the elephants took the initiative while the men took to the trees. Then the elephants spent the whole of that night as if waiting for the men to come down, while the natives clung painfully and desperately to branches. It was only in the dawn, ten minutes before I arrived, that the elephants at last moved off and a party of very stiff and disgruntled natives descended to the earth. Much as I should like to spend my entire life in wild forests among animals, I could not help congratulating myself then on the fact that Fate had made me an English photographer and not a native tracker: a bed at night or even a carefully-prepared platform in a tree is infinitely preferable to an irregularly-shaped branch with a herd of elephants beneath it.

I turned my attention next to tigers. For a long time I was unsuccessful, but at last we came to a little grass clearing, through which ran a pathway leading to a village. There I noticed two furrows, and on looking down as we got abreast of them, I saw something more—the fresh pug-marks of a tiger—and a big one at that. In my excitement I got down from the elephant's back and soon discovered what had happened. A

bullock had been straying and the tiger had caught him by the nose, dragging him on all fours into the densely matted jungle. The tiger's footprints were embedded deep in the bare soft earth as it had pulled its victim along, a sort of tug-of-war which the bullock had lost.

While I was hesitating as to what to do, I noticed that at one point on the edge of the jungle, the undergrowth was broken and trampled: and then I saw that this was the beginning of a sort of tunnel, about three feet high, leading apparently into the heart of the forest. A careful inspection of the entrance of this tunnel made it clear that this was the tiger's private pathway; moreover, that the animal had dragged the body of the dead bullock along it only a short time before.

It was clear then that if I wanted to visit my tiger friend, I must walk—or rather crawl—up his garden path. And although I had no doubt about the dangers, I was so keen on getting these photographs that I decided to ignore the advice of an Indian game warden, who was with me, and to make the attempt. So I drew my revolver, keeping it ready in my hand, and then I went down on hands and knees and began to creep forward.

The light was poor and I knew that if the tiger

was somewhere in the undergrowth on either side of me—as seemed highly probable—it would be aware of my coming before I could see it; then it would charge—and a revolver is not much of a weapon with which to stop a charging tiger. Perhaps if I had had more experience of India, I would not have attempted anything so foolhardy; nor would I have done in any case if I had been less determined to succeed in my ambition of securing films of a tiger to go with those which I had already taken of a lion. I cannot deny that many times during those few minutes I regretted my hasty decision and longed to turn back. But turning would have meant putting the danger at my back, while crawling backwards down a narrow and dark tunnel is a laborious and painful exercise. In any case, I continued to go forward, crawling inch by inch and continually peering into the darkness, while the perspiration streamed from my body and my heart pounded against my ribs.

Altogether I went about twenty yards. Then I saw something dark crouching on the ground in front of me. There was no longer any question of going back—if this was the tiger, I could not escape before the animal sprang. So I took a firmer grip on my revolver and waited. The

animal did not move. After a minute, I became accustomed to the darkness and then I saw that this was not a crouching tiger, but the body of the bullock.

I was certain then that the tiger could not be far off, and realized what a foolish thing I had done—I confess to experiencing a nasty cold shivery feeling down my spine. So prompted, I made haste to escape. Slowly and carefully, with a snake-like movement, I backed, and at length came to the entrance of the tunnel and emerged with relief into the clear light of day.

This time I listened to the advice of the Indian game warden. He said that the tiger must be close by and that we must get help at once to have it surrounded so that it could not escape: then it could be driven towards me and I could get my photographs.

Accordingly we moved silently off, and within a quarter of a mile suddenly came upon a village.

The news spread quickly and it was not long before fifty men had collected in the roadway around the game warden, a few with spears, but the majority carrying poles some ten feet long and sections of heavy rope netting with a mesh of four or five inches.

The procession started in single file, and we

soon arrived at the tiger's pathway where the bullock had been dragged in. I was left there whilst the game warden stationed his men at intervals in a big circle through the forest.

Then for the next thirty minutes the men worked at erecting a sort of cage, or fencing, by fixing the poles upright in the ground and securing the heavy netting between them. Beyond this fencing fires were built, so that the tiger—caged in an enclosed area of forest—should be deterred from trying to force his way out.

The plan, it appeared, was for me to go *inside* that cage—with the tiger!

When all was ready, an opening was made in the net near one of the poles, and I entered with four men; two armed with a kind of bill-hook, whose job was to clear a way in the jungle, and two spearmen to act as guards.

Suddenly a great shout went up from one side of the enclosure, and the men with the bill-hooks stopped, looking anxiously at each other. My two spearmen whispered together and I, although unable to understand them, could easily guess what they were saying—that the tiger was on the move. So far so good!

We cut our way to a small clearing, and I signed to my spearmen that this was the place

where I would set up the camera. I soon had the machine put together and focused on the spot from which I thought the tiger was most likely to come. Quickly I built up a leaf screen—little enough protection from a caged and savage tiger—and then the two spearmen and I escorted the woodcutters back and saw them out of the net, which closed us in again.

Some forty yards brought us back to the camera. I had a final look to see that all was as it should be, and that no small branches or leaves had fallen across the view of the lens, while the two spearmen crouched behind me. They were keen fellows and fine specimens of their race.

Ten minutes were to be allowed before operations began, and for those ten minutes of silence we were pretty keenly on edge. The jungle to our left was very thick, and from it continually came sudden noises which were probably caused by birds, but which gave us scares again and again as we stared into the jungle, wondering if the tiger were there, if it had made the noise, if it was hidden only a few yards from us and was just about to spring. I must admit it was a great relief when the first tin can banged at the farther corner of what I can only describe as our cage. Then a second and a third—but all at one end—

then pandemonium and a great shouting, enough to disturb half the tigers in Mysore. A man had posted himself up a tree, just outside the rope net, with the idea that when he saw the tiger coming my way he was to tap like a woodpecker. During a lull, I heard this tapping, and in what seemed to be hours but was only a matter of seconds, I caught a glimpse of a movement in the under-growth. The little natural clearing was only fifteen yards across yet in the surrounding forest we could see hardly anything. What was that? The tiger? A bird? A few seconds went by, then I heard another movement, almost uncanny in its stealthiness, and the tiger was looking at me!

It was immense, fully eleven feet long and far bigger than any lion I had then seen. It was growling and snarling with anger at being disturbed, and just as it came fully into my sight it gave a terrible cough—a sound which for the moment terrified me; I had never heard anything like it. I did not then know, as an experienced Indian hunter would have known, that that cough is the greatest danger-sign in the jungles, but though I lacked that expert knowledge, I was in no doubt as to what would happen if my frail screen of leaves failed to hide me from the beast's sight.

Yet it was a moment of complete triumph. The tiger was beautifully posed before me, giving its exhibition of ferocity at the beating of cans and the shouting behind it, and gazing straight into the lens—though fortunately, without seeing either it or me. I have never in my whole life had a finer opportunity for a picture.

The tiger stopped for a second, then it turned and disappeared. I was not altogether sorry to see it go. I had the photographs I wanted—better ones than I had ever dreamed of—and neither I nor any of the trackers had been hurt. So I came out of my hiding-place, my two spearmen joined me and we stood wondering what we should do next.

What we did do next was to climb very hastily into trees. For while we were thus very rashly standing in a group, the tiger returned. If it had come silently, one at least of us would have paid the penalty; but fortunately it was too angry for that, and it gave warning of its coming with another of those terrific coughs.

After that alarm, we were none of us in much of a hurry to climb down again from our trees. But when, after some time of silence, it seemed clear that the tiger had definitely abandoned us,

we descended and made our way cautiously out of the net.

The trackers and the people of the neighbouring village weren't much interested in photography and they regarded tigers as something akin to vermin—to be killed. The presence of this tiger having been established, therefore, fifteen spearmen went out in search of him—a courageous thing to do for against such an animal a spear seemed even less effective than the revolver in which I had set my trust a short time before. Perhaps that is why, when the tiger was found and stood at bay, twelve of the spearmen vanished. For a few seconds the remaining three faced the tiger at a distance of only nine yards, while the animal coughed and snarled and made ready to spring.

It was a terrible moment. I have seen the Masai spearing a lion, but then there was a small army of natives and the lion was surrounded on all sides. And that was in open country with no cover for the lion but a few bushes. Here on the other hand, the fight took place in thick jungle, and at the critical moment there were only three spearmen—indeed, at the instant when the tiger sprang there was only one, for a second earlier two of the men had turned to flee and

the last—like Horatius at the bridge—stood alone.

I have often wondered what that native thought as he stood facing this immense and terrible beast and realized that all his friends had deserted him: that within a second the charge would bring the tiger straight at his chest: and that his only weapon was his spear. Yet he cannot have had much time to think, for within a second he was stretched on the ground with the tiger standing over him. The brute gave one growl and then lowered its head.

I don't know whether the shout that I gave then was intentional or instinctive. But certainly it saved that native's life. The tiger paused—in another second its victim's head would have been crushed between its jaws—it coughed again and stared at me so that I felt that after all my life would depend on my revolver, and then it suddenly turned, leap clean through the netting, and disappeared in the jungle.

From India I went to Borneo. Again the scene changed. I no longer travelled on elephant-back, but either in a canoe up crocodile-infested rivers or on foot through the jungle.

I suppose most people will agree that the only kind of small craft which is really made for the comfort of passengers is the punt. Small, shallow canoes are good enough for an hour; but when you travel in them for days at a time they become exceedingly uncomfortable—particularly if they are of the primitive type, hollowed out of small trees. They threaten to capsize at every moment and although the paddlers can keep their balance with the paddles, the wretched passenger has no such aid and he knows that if he moves unduly—and who does not want to move after six hours in a cramped position?—the craft will immediately turn turtle. I am a strong swimmer and in any reasonable current could probably hold my own; but I am thankful that I did not succumb to the temptations which cramp thrust upon me while travelling up that river, for again and again an ugly snout would push out, the water would be stirred by the slow lashing of a great scaly tail, and a crocodile would come lazily to look at us. Lazily—yes, crocodiles are lazy when there is nothing to disturb them, or when the only traffic on the river consists of canoes, but they are far from that when seeking a prey. Then they move incredibly fast, there is a swirl in the water, a snap of jaws, a little whirlpool on the surface into

which a few bubbles rise—and all is over. I do not like crocodiles.

Nor do I like the jungles of North Borneo. They are so thick that I had to hack my way through with a knife or parang, and the density of undergrowth and foliage is reinforced by some terrible bushes known as "wait-a-bit." This is a real example of humour in nomenclature, for the bushes are armed with hooked thorns which catch your clothing or your flesh and compel you to halt while you remove them. The more you try to pull away, the faster you are caught. I imagine that the name was decided on by the first English traveller some time after he had returned to the comforts of civilization, for the humour of the situation, I am sure, would only appear in retrospect: when actually fighting and struggling with these terrible thorns, one feels entirely disinclined for jocularity!

In addition to these obstacles, there was mud. It was hidden by the thickness of the country, but often one sank into it knee-deep: it was half liquid and thoroughly "squelchy." The country, too, was infested with insects and scorpions and snakes. There were land-leeches—nasty little creatures which dropped off the leaves as I passed, clung to my skin and drank my blood:

at first I tried pulling them off, but the result was an open and painful sore, so at last I learnt the local custom of scorching them with the lighted end of a cigarette. There were poisonous-looking centipedes, and swarms of some variety of wasp. And there were snakes of all horrible kinds: once, while sleeping in an up-country hut, I found one coiled round the post that supported my mosquito net.

Perhaps in these circumstances it is not surprising that when marching through the jungle I did not succeed in travelling more than six miles a day.

While I enjoyed my trip, I must confess that from the photographic point of view it was not an entire success, although I was lucky enough to get the first picture of the orang-outang at home in the jungle. The light was not good and it rained nearly the whole time, and although I took pictures of many sorts of birds, of monkeys, of a charming little animal called the loris, of wild pigs and of buck, I did not find any creatures the securing of whose pictures could give me the thrills that I had found in Africa and India.

I did, however, have one unforgettable adventure.

I had found the nest of a giant hornbill. The family life of this bird is peculiar. When the nesting season arrives, a nest is made in a hollow in the upper part of a tree trunk. The mother bird takes her seat in this cavity, and the male bird then proceeds to plaster up the edge of it, covering it in completely with a wall of mud so that his mate is securely imprisoned, except for one tiny hole out of which she can put her bill when he brings food for her and the little ones.

At first sight of this, one is reminded of the precautions taken in eastern countries where the harem is in favour: but I suspect that the real reason for it is to protect the mother bird and her young from raids by monkeys or by snakes.

I was anxious to obtain some cinematograph film of the male bird regurgitating, so I built myself a hide of green calico and ensconced myself in it with my camera. Of course, at that time the male bird was away in search of food and although the mother bird must have noticed me, there was little that she, in her prison, could do about it. But it seemed that she had a host of unintentional allies, who soon set about me, and very nearly drove me out of my position.

First, an immense army of ants started to cross my boots—fortunately they regarded me only as a

hill in their path which had to be surmounted, and not as a tasty morsel for dinner.

Then the monkeys came, regarding my "hide" with great curiosity, jumping on the branches around me, peering through the leaves, chattering all the while and continually bothering me with their attentions. They were harmless, but annoying. While they were there, it was not likely that the male bird would return, and I did not wish to waste my whole day in an uncomfortable position merely in order to listen to the chattering of small monkeys.

For my position *was* an uncomfortable one. I had had neither time nor the materials to build myself a place of comfort, and I had, in my "hide," to occupy a very small space. Accordingly I sat on the ground with my knees drawn up close to my chin. Then to my delight, the male bird arrived and I secured a few feet of film before he departed in search of fresh supplies. I settled myself to wait for his return. But this time the wait was a still longer one and once again I endured the most horrible cramp, which is one of the torments of my occupation, and which even the longest experience does not entirely eradicate. And then, after I had sat like that altogether for three hours, I suddenly saw a big snake. Its head was towards

me, facing the gap between my body and my feet: that is to say, it was about to enter the arch made by my raised knees!

It was a deadly creature and I knew at once that my only chance was to keep absolutely still. If I tried to rise, I should be bitten long before I could get to my feet. If I even stirred, or shifted a foot, or moved a hand, the same fate would befall me. And even then, however still I kept, the snake might realize that I was not a branch of a tree, that I was some member of the animal kingdom—and strike.

Indeed, as I sat there, with perspiration trickling down my face from my forehead, I could not believe that I should escape with my life. However still I might keep—and could I keep still while the creature so slowly passed under my legs?—surely the snake would know that I was human and bite me? Yet to remain immovable was my only chance.

For if I was bitten, I should die. I had no medicine in my immediate kit and anyone who could help me was too far away.

So I sat still. Very still. The snake had already moved forward, so that its head was out of sight—*under my knees*. I could not see its tail, without turning my head, and that I dared not do. I

could not tell how long it was. I could only see a patch of grey snake-skin, just to the right of my right knee, and presently—after what seemed an age of tormented waiting—the creature's head beginning to reappear on the left of my left knee. Once it stopped, seemed to look at me—and then glided on its way.

I did not know whether the snake was twenty feet long, or ten feet or four. But at the time it seemed as if it must be fifty feet at least and that the time it took to pass must be measured in hours!

As a matter of fact the snake's length was barely five feet, and I suppose that the hours which I seemed to count must really have been minutes. But gradually I realized that I could no longer see the creature's head . . . only a stretch of grey body on either side of me. Then at last, with an unforgettable spasm of joy, hastily crushed down in my mind for fear lest it should betray me into movement, I saw the body tapering, and I knew that in another second the tail would be in view.

I saw that tail appear; then it stopped; then I saw it disappear beneath my legs. Then in what was perhaps the greatest agony of all, I waited for the final moment when it would rustle out of sight.

At last that happened. There was no snake to

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be seen. I breathed once more. I did not know where the snake had gone, whether after passing under me it had turned, so that it would still see me if I moved and be near enough to strike, or whether it had gone straight on to disappear into the jungle. But I could wait no longer. Very gingerly, I moved one foot and waited. Nothing happened. I could take no more precautions. I leapt to my feet, pushed aside the green cloth, and fled from the spot.

It was in the following year that I went to America and Canada. As far as the latter country was concerned, I photographed principally the moose: but I cannot claim to have had any specially interesting adventures. In America, however, it was different for there I met both buffalo and bears.

It is perhaps hardly true to say that I "met" the buffalo. A more accurate account is that one of them chased me.

I found them in Yellowstone Park, that enormous game reserve in which America preserves her wild game. It is a marvellous place, a great wild patch of country, seventy miles across, rich in canyons, waterfalls that are hundreds of feet

high, stretches of forest, and indeed all the beauties of Nature. The district is divided up amongst a series of "keepers" who are responsible for seeing that natural conditions are preserved and that nothing in the shape of a gun is used there. I secured the services of an excellent guide, Dick Randall, who had been a coach-driver and also a hunter, but had nevertheless contrived to spend thirty years in and around the Park. He knew a tremendous amount about the local natural history and was besides a most excellent companion. He received me very kindly—and that shows his good nature, for he must have regarded me at first with some suspicion, since my arrival had been heralded by a telegram from the authorities in Washington: "Cherry Kearton has permission to *fake* photographs." An easy telegraphic mistake in one letter—but what a difference!

Though Dick was now leading a peaceful life, his early days had been as eventful as those of the hero of any Wild West "shocker." After we had been together for three months in the Rockies, I went for a time to his little ranch, and there, in the evenings, he regaled me with stories that are worthy of a book to themselves. One in particular I remember, because of the contrast between its

bloodthirsty details and the unemotional, matter-of-fact way in which Dick told it.

It appeared that he once had a quarrel with a man—the “real stuff” quarrel which we sometimes see depicted on the films, ending with the other man saying: “All right. You wait. One day I’ll get you.” Dick was too old a hand to disregard the threat. He knew that one day, though it might be years hence, the man *would* “get him”—or at least try to. So in a way that it is difficult for peaceable English folk to understand, he remembered and slept with his revolver in his hand. Some years afterwards, he was lying in bed in a little shack when he awoke in the night to see the door slowly opening. As Dick turned over and raised his revolver, the bed creaked; and at that the intruder threw caution aside, flung open the door and let fly. The bullet struck Dick in the shoulder—and there it remains to this day. But in the same instant, Dick also fired, and his bullet drilled a neat hole in the man’s forehead. And that was that. Just a scene out of everyday Western life.

The American bison (which is generally called buffalo) is quite different from the African

buffalo, the difference being chiefly noticeable in his head and neck, which are covered with shaggy hair, whereas those of the buffalo in Africa are smooth. You do not notice the leering grin—there is instead an “old village grandfather” sort of expression. And the hump on the back is much more pronounced. On the other hand there is the similarity that with neither animal do you usually get much of a chance to observe these physical peculiarities at really close quarters.

In my case I certainly didn’t. I first sighted a herd of the animals a mile away, from some high ground, and Dick Randall and I, on horseback, rode towards them. As soon as we got within about a quarter of a mile, they moved off. We followed, and I got a picture of them crossing a river. A short time later, we came upon a solitary old buffalo who seemed to prefer roaming by himself to moving with the herd. At any rate solitariness evidently appealed to him and he distinctly resented our intrusion on his domain. He lowered his head and charged. And we fled.

It was gratifying to prove that our horses could outdistance a buffalo, but it didn’t look as if I was going to get the close-up photographs I particularly wanted.

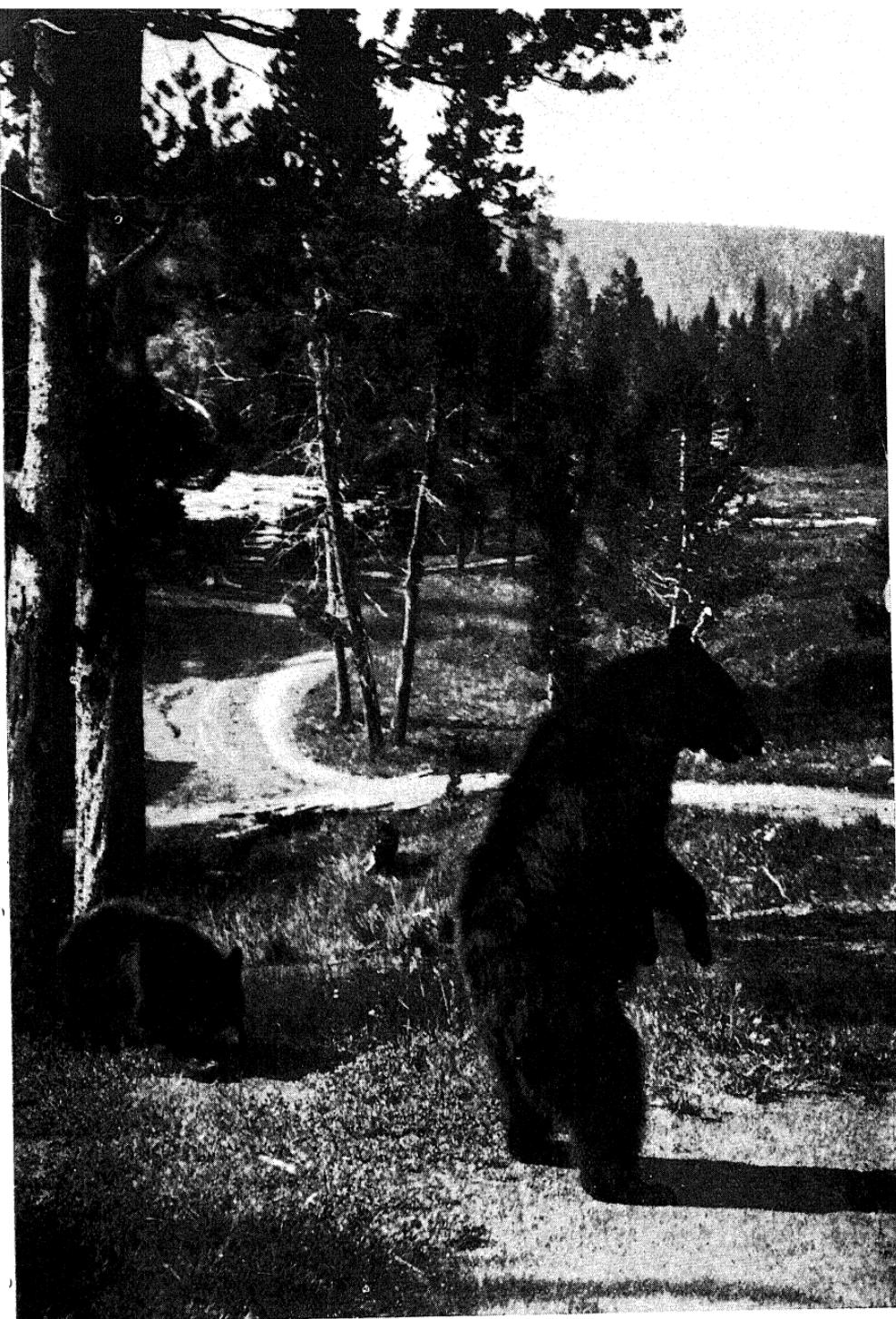
Even the buffalo "keepers" were constantly having narrow escapes. Only a few days before my arrival one had been chased and in riding away at full gallop he had stuck, or rather his horse had stuck, in a swamp. He thought it was all up with him then, but luckily the buffalo, following close at his heels, stuck too: and there were buffalo and horse, the one a few yards behind the other, both struggling desperately to withdraw their hoofs from the morass and both unable to move. Another keeper, I learnt, was chased till he took refuge in a tree, where he spent the whole day with the buffalo waiting for him to come down.

For my own part I did succeed in getting a short run of film of a herd, as it rested and browsed in a valley, but my efforts at "close-ups" were a complete fiasco.

But I did better with the bears. I suppose everyone has a warm spot in his heart for these animals, which look friendly even when they are nothing of the sort. We cuddle toy bears in our childhood, and when we grow up we stand on the edge of the bear-pit at the Zoological Gardens and throw buns in a spirit of high good humour and friendliness. Nevertheless, bears can be very savage and even the most friendly photographer should approach them with caution.

My first news of these animals came in the night, when I was awakened from sleep in my camp by a sound of jingling, as if someone was playing with tin cans: and as a matter of fact that was exactly what was happening, except that the bear was not playing but was feeding off our camp refuse. In the morning, when I went out to fetch water, I met him, standing facing me on the path. I felt like introducing myself as a newcomer to the country and saying how much I would like to know him better. But he didn't give me time. He looked me up and down, as if to say in broad American: "Waal, I'll be seeing ya," and then he turned and waddled off.

My next experience was with a mother and her cub. The little creature was very cuddlesome—a really charming little creature, much like an overgrown teddy bear. I took his portrait and also his mother's; but the mother, after the manner of mothers, didn't like strangers interfering with her child and watched me with the utmost suspicion. Luckily she didn't make any advances in my direction but directed her energies to keeping her child out of my reach; whenever the youngster strayed towards me, she chased it, slapped it, drove it up a tree and then stood on guard.



DANCING MOTHER.



FOLLOWING IN HIS MOTHER'S FOOTSTEPS.

Later, I was resting one day on a fallen tree, when a very large bear came along, mounted the tree at the opposite end and came slowly along it towards me—a situation rather like the famous one in which Robinson Crusoe figured, except there was no distance between me and the ground. I remember that Crusoe was very far, on that occasion, from regarding the bear as “lovable and cuddlesome,” and certainly, in my case, I took much the same attitude. I had been informed that the bears in Yellowstone Park were “usually” harmless—but it looked as if this might be one of the exceptions. For this bear came closer and closer. I got an excellent full-size cinematograph portrait of him, but then I felt that our acquaintance should end and I became distinctly alarmed when he continued to approach me. At last I let out a shout and sprang to my feet. He shouted too—or rather grunted—and sprang back: and then we both fled from one another.

Despite this little adventure and one or two others, I finally came to the conclusion that these bears were much more interested in “scrounging” than in attacking. They liked visiting the refuse piles of camps. They adored tins. Once a bear actually entered our camp in the night and came right up to a tent; but there he concentrated his

ADVENTURES WITH ANIMALS AND MEN

attention on a seven-pound tin of lard and was quite contented with that.

But if not usually dangerous, the animals were certainly a nuisance at night. I suppose they knew that we were unarmed. They used actually to scrape with their claws at the canvas of the tents and to scratch up the earth beside it. One of them succeeded in reaching under the tent-flap and stealing a pound tin of tobacco from me—though he didn't like the weed as much as I did and soon abandoned it. Another stole a ham—the last we had—and we had to chase him with a whip and drive him up a tree before we could get it back.

Yet on the whole I approve of bears. You cannot feel unfriendly towards a creature in a fur coat, who waddles, with his toes turned in.

Thus I went East and West. I did not go to Australia; that still remains one of my ambitions, which I hope one day to accomplish. Because it provided more exciting adventures and more intense animal interests, I preferred the East to the West, and India to Borneo. Yet I did not like any of these countries so much as Africa. There is a sense of being alone with Nature in the

EAST AND WEST

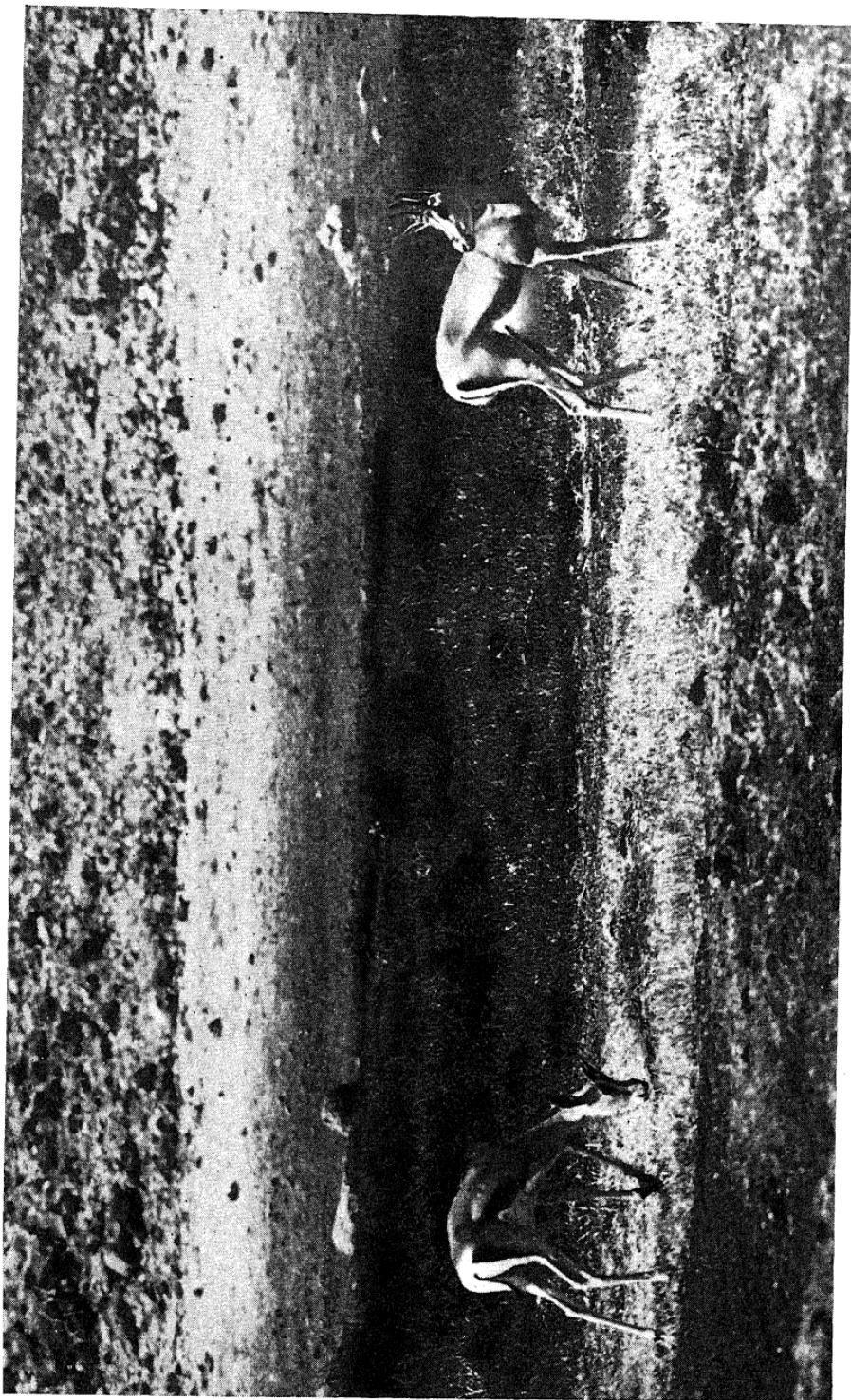
heart of the African bush which, as far as I have experienced, one gets nowhere else. The vast herds of buck, the hippo in the river, the lions, the leopards, the extraordinarily fascinating occupants of mammoth ant-hills—all these and many other things draw me to Africa again and again. Even in those early days, I decided that that continent had attractions for me which were unequalled. I made up my mind that I would go there again and again. And from the moment of my return from America, my thoughts turned to the joy of the African safari, the hides among birds by the Great Lakes, the possibilities of one day photographing the gorilla, and the idea of presenting on the cinematograph screen every one of the fascinations of African animal life.

CHAPTER SIX

ACROSS AFRICA

IN April 1913, Jim Barnes and I set out to cross Africa from the east coast to the west. We started from Mombassa, and with many deviations from the direct route we went up to Nairobi, crossed the north-east corner of Victoria Nyanza, passed between Albert Nyanza and the Rewenzori, followed the upper reaches of the Aruwimi River through the great forests (along the route taken by H. M. Stanley), and then went for some twelve hundred miles down the River Congo to the sea.

We were both experienced African travellers and we had one important quality in common—a love of wild animal life. Consequently, we agreed before the start that the purpose of the expedition was to be the securing of cinematograph pictures and nothing else: we would carry weapons, but they should only be used in urgent self-defence and for securing food for the pot. This resolution was faithfully adhered to, and although, as I shall relate, we did use our rifles on more than one



GAZELLES—A STUDY IN GRACE.



ORYX—"UNAWARE OF BEING OBSERVED."

ACROSS AFRICA

occasion against creatures which were useless as food, it was only when lives were at stake. Hunting as a "sport" did not appeal to either of us and we proved to our complete satisfaction that all the thrills which delight big-game hunters were felt equally by big-game photographers and that photography as a sport was immensely superior to killing.

I had met Jim Barnes a few months before in New York, and had quickly realized that we were kindred spirits. He was certainly an admirable fellow, with a great feeling for fun, an equable temperament (the most important thing of all when two white men are to be alone together for months in the heart of the jungle), never-failing resource, and great courage.

I had remarkable evidence of his sang-froid in Kenya, a few weeks after the start.

We had built a hide near some water-holes not far from the Abyssinian border, where impalla and giraffe and other creatures were accustomed to feed and I was in it with a man named Lydford who was in charge of the porters. Barnes had gone off alone with the idea of "having a look round": it was my job on the expedition to do most of the photography, but he was a good observer of natural history and while I was busy

he liked to walk about alone and study the antics of the baboons and practise stalking more formidable creatures. On these short expeditions he used to carry a small-calibre rifle, "in case of necessity," but he counted rather on field-craft and general caution to keep him out of danger.

During the day, Lydford and I heard the roaring of lions, and though I was confident that Barnes could take care of himself I felt that I should be glad to see him return. And then he came, sauntering with perhaps too great an appearance of carelessness towards the hide, and whistling as he came.

It was that whistling that told me that something had been amiss. Barnes invariably smiled and was always cheery: but he didn't normally whistle. And now his whistling would certainly not have won him a scholarship at the Royal Academy of Music. It faltered and broke down more than once, and then was renewed with an obvious effort—the effort of a man who is shaken and refuses to admit it.

So I came out of the hide and then the whole story came out.

He had been walking along, when suddenly he heard the sharp bark of a baboon. Of course he knew instantly what that meant—it was a warn-

ing. The baboons have a language of their own, and a practice of leaving one of their number always stationed as a sentinel to give warning to the troop of the approach of danger: if leopard or lion approaches, this sentinel makes a sound between a bark and a cough, and immediately all the baboons make for safety either on to rocks or in the tree-tops.

Hearing this sound, Barnes looked sharply up, and discovered that the baboons had already climbed to safety—and that they were greatly perturbed. If he had been wiser, he would have at once taken the hint and retreated; but he could not then see what was the trouble and he welcomed this chance to watch the baboons in a moment of alarm. So he crossed a dried-up river bed which separated him from them and stood amongst the palm-trees, looking up.

The country was there fairly open and flat, with a little rise in the ground forty yards away. No sooner had Barnes reached the foot of the palm-trees, when he was startled to hear a snarling grunt which made him turn quickly towards the rising ground; and then, over the brow of it, he saw appearing a big male lion, followed by a lioness and a cub of about a year old.

The lion immediately rushed forward towards

Barnes and then stopped, standing faced towards him and grunting angrily, while the lioness also approached and then lay down, leaving the cub a few paces in the rear.

It was an extremely uncomfortable predicament. Palm-trees are not easily climbed, so there was no escape that way. If he had retreated, the lions would at once have advanced and—as he very well knew—he could not have hoped to out-distance them. His only chance, therefore, was to stand his ground. He had, of course, his small rifle—but at this critical moment he made the alarming discovery that he had only two cartridges. Why he had been so careless as to go out without even filling his magazine, he did not know; but that was the fact. Even if the cub could be disregarded—and this was by no means certain—he had two cartridges for the lion and the lioness: one for each, and useless unless both shots proved fatal. If he fired first at the lion, and missed, there was little hope for him. If his first shot only succeeded in wounding the animal, the position would be equally hopeless, except that the end would come quicker.

Not unnaturally, in this position, he hesitated to fire at all. And perhaps it was as well, for it is very doubtful if in that moment of excitement he

would have had the coolness to make two perfect shots. Instead, he stood there under the trees, while the baboons continued to shout unnecessary warnings above him, and he stared at the lions, while they stared back at him.

How long this lasted I do not know—and nor did he. But suddenly the cub, which had not taken as much interest in the proceedings as its parents were doing, decided to move away, and it disappeared over the brow of the hill. The lion turned leisurely and followed it. For a full minute the lioness remained hesitating, turning her head twice to look towards her departing family, but each time turning back to look desirously at Barnes. And still Barnes stood with his rifle ready for action, but praying that he would not have to put that action to the test.

Then at last, the lioness rose and made off. No sooner was she beyond the hill, than a great growling arose, which suggested that these three were part of a large troop: but Barnes did not wait to investigate. He made off as quickly as he could in search of Lydford and myself—and then, as if to show that these little adventures were really all in the day's work for big-game photographers in Africa, he started whistling. As a gesture it was great, and I do not blame him if he faltered on the notes.

Some weeks later, Barnes and I figured together in an adventure which might easily have had disastrous consequences for ourselves as well as for several others. It has this in common with Barnes's experience with the lions—that the thing which turned climax into anti-climax and danger into safety, was merely the waywardness of one animal, which suddenly and for no apparent reason turned away and induced the others to follow it. I have known this to happen many times, so that I appreciate the truth of the saying that there is safety in numbers—safety for the photographer in the numbers of the animals that threaten him. If wild animals were disciplined, so that they waited for orders from their leader, there would be fewer white men in the wild parts of Africa.

We went to the Kumiti swamp, not far from Nairobi, to photograph buffalo. In this flat, swampy country, a herd of quite a hundred of these fierce creatures lived among the tall papyrus. Unfortunately, their nearness to Nairobi had made them a great temptation to hunters and the resultant shooting had rendered them excessively wary and ferocious. Buffalo are fierce at the best of times and it is always a part of their creed that attack is the best means of defence: so that taking

ACROSS AFRICA

their portraits is dangerous and exceedingly difficult. I have made many attempts and have nearly lost my life in doing so on several occasions, but I have had no experience with them that came anywhere near to equalling the excitement of this adventure in the Kumiti swamp.

This herd once very nearly killed Colonel Roosevelt, and they had so evil a reputation that it was hard to persuade even the natives to go near them. Only a short time before our arrival a small party of natives had driven an ox-wagon to the edge of the swamp and the buffalo had immediately come down on them in a great charge, one hundred deadly creatures advancing in a mass with the object of annihilating men and oxen. And as a matter of fact they succeeded in killing one native and five of the oxen before they were driven off by rifle fire.

I had tried before to get photographs of this herd, but had found it impossible to get within range in daylight, while to creep up in the night merely meant that I was put to headlong flight directly the sun rose. But this time we meant to do better, using my previous experience to good purpose.

As tanks (in the military sense) had not then

been invented, my idea was to provide myself with an unscalable fortress, rather like the "keep" of an old castle. With a good deal of trouble, I got possession of a large water-tank, about six feet in circumference and some ten feet high. It was quite strong enough to resist the horns of buffalo, though I could picture it being overturned by a mass attack of a hundred of the animals. But my idea was to get it transported to the swamp and then, choosing a time when the buffalo were elsewhere, to erect it on the swamp, letting it sink into the moist ground and filling it with stones and earth—something like the modern principle of reinforced concrete. We should thus have an impregnable fortress, on the top of which, well above the danger-mark, we could wait through the day (and if necessary for several days) until we secured our photographs. Exactly how we were afterwards to descend and escape, I had not fully worked out—after all, although one can plan the commencement of a battle, its end has always to be left to Fate.

Having secured the basis of our fort, we had it lifted on to an ox-wagon and then we advanced to the neighbourhood of the swamp and halted to consider the position. We sent out natives as scouts and before long the news arrived that the



WILD DOG.

THE BATTALION WILL ADVANCE IN FOURS.



herd was gathered beyond the further side of the swamp, fully three miles away.

This seemed to be a striking piece of good fortune and we hastened to take advantage of it. Of course, we ought to have observed the first rule of organization and have checked our information; but, unfortunately, we didn't. The news pleased us so much that we assumed it to be true.

We had with us a local settler (the proprietor of the wagon) and a very sporting travelling missionary. Lydford was still with us, so that there were five white men in addition to the gang of natives engaged for the transport and erection of the fort. It was quite a formidable little army, but though that would have helped if the buffalo had attacked us in force, it was a hindrance when we started to get into position without making a noise. Moreover, the empty tank seemed to bounce on the wagon as it travelled on the uneven ground and dull booms came continually from it. However, we consoled ourselves with the thought that, loud as the uproar sounded to us, it couldn't possibly be heard by the buffalo three miles away, and long before they returned we should have the tank erected and filled.

We had sent forward some of the natives the day before to prepare a site so that the tank could

be readily unshipped, and now as we came down the sloping last two hundred yards we saw the swamp stretching for a mile on either side of us, and three-quarters of a mile into the distance, and we saw the prepared spot on which our tank was to be erected.

Everything seemed beautifully quiet and peaceful. Although I had accepted the word of our native scouts, I looked at first a little anxiously in search of a species of beautiful white bird, the "cow herons" who feed on the ticks in the hides of buffalo. When the animals are stationary, the birds flutter down and get busy with their meal; but when the animals are moving, the birds follow them, hovering overhead—and so disclosing their whereabouts to any hunter or photographer who may be looking for them. Though I knew that this herd could not have travelled three miles in the short space of time since the news of it had reached us, I nevertheless scanned the swamp for fluttering specks of white, in case any others of these animals should be around.

Being satisfied on this point, I gave the word, and the ox-wagon proceeded down the slope. And then, without any warning, a flock of the white cow herons rose up right in front of us; and then out of the papyrus came buffalo after buffalo,

until there must have been fully a hundred staring threateningly at us!

Exactly what I thought about those native scouts who had misled us, cannot be set down here. I imagine they did their work carelessly, failed to see any buffalo or cow herons, and accordingly assumed that none were near. But where the story of the herd having moved for three miles originated, I still do not know! Perhaps the natives' wish was father to their thought.

The buffalo stood facing us in a compact, irregular mass, still and silent: their heads were raised, their black muzzles thrust forward, and their enormous horns stretched back on a level with their bodies. Buffalo have a slightly sneering expression, as if they were contemptuous of man—and I dare say they are, for the only men who are not afraid of them are those who have had no experience of them. No one who had ever faced a single buffalo—let alone a large herd—would have had any doubt of our danger at that moment. To run was hopeless. The instinct of chasing is alert in most of the dangerous animals and they regard flight as only an evidence of weakness and an invitation to pursuit. And as buffalo can charge much faster than any man can

run, an attempt to escape in that way could only lead to immediate disaster.

On this occasion, we reacted to the danger according to our separate natures. Most of the natives either dived under the wagon or crouched behind it. The farmer thought primarily of saving his ox-team and began to cut them loose from the wagon; there was no chance of saving the wagon itself and no time to unyoke the animals—slashing strokes with a knife were the only chance. Barnes, Lydford, and the missionary knelt and covered the foremost buffalo with their rifles, while their expressions suggested that they thought the position hopeless, but would sell their lives and ours as dearly as possible. And I—well, I followed my own liveliest instinct, which must, I suppose, be very apparent to those who read the stories in these pages: I leapt for my camera, which was in its case on the wagon, and prepared to take pictures of the buffalo.

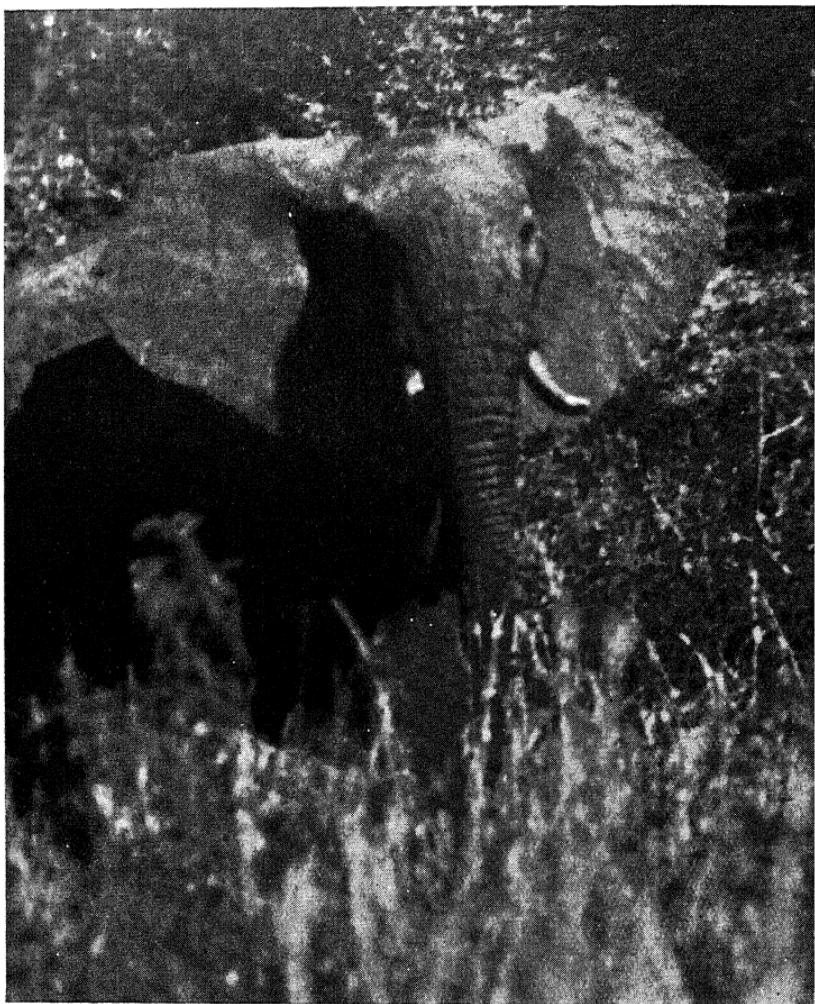
Then a bull buffalo—a terrific creature and presumably the leader of the herd—stepped forward and we all knew that it would be only a matter of seconds before the whole hundred of them came crashing down on us. My fingers left the handle of the cinematograph-camera and moved towards my rifle, as it lay on the side of the



CHALLENGE.



IMPENDING ATTACK.



THE LAST SECOND BEFORE THE PHOTOGRAPHER MOVES OFF.

wagon. And then, just as the critical moment seemed to have come, two of the buffalo, from the extreme left of the herd, turned and came lumbering along—not at us, but across the front of the threatening line.

I do not know why they turned. Perhaps they were startled, perhaps they were thinking of other matters and were merely starting away on their own; but they left the line and by the greatest good fortune they came in front of it so that the others were aware of their movement and distracted by it. A sense of alarm seemed to spread through the herd and within thirty seconds they had all turned in the same direction as those two and were moving off.

The old bull turned with the others. The cow herons, which had been on the ground behind the buffalo when they were stationary, rose in a white fluttering cloud and followed the moving herd as it moved along the edge of the swamp and then plunged into the thickness of the papyrus. We had faced a danger from which there had seemed no escape; and yet, apparently merely through the waywardness of two of the animals, we had escaped without firing a shot.

As so often happens, the rest was anti-climax. We pulled ourselves together and set to work at

once to carry out our original plan. The team was fastened once more to the wagon and proceeded down the slope. Then the great tank was lowered into position and the natives with picks and spades and baskets began to dig up earth and stones and pour it into the "fort." Before long, it was solidly full, immovable and unassailable. Then, the other white men having departed, Barnes and I, with my camera and a store of food, climbed on to the top of it and settled ourselves as comfortably as possible to wait till the animals came back.

But they didn't. Two small groups of the animals came, but not near enough for me to get good pictures of them. The herd as a whole did not return while we were there. And as our purpose on this expedition was not to secure photographs of one particular species, but to complete our journey across Africa, we could not wait indefinitely. We left the fortress on the edge of the Kumiti swamp, a tin tower of immense strength rising out of the ground: and I have no doubt that within an hour or two of our departure a hundred buffalo were gathered round it, showing themselves admirably in position for the photographer who was no longer there.

ACROSS AFRICA

The difficulties that beset us on our journey were not confined to encounters with wild animals. We had trouble in the Congo with our porters, (more than once we had to deal with threatened "strikes"), we narrowly escaped catching small-pox in a stricken native village, we ran short of rations, and at times all the elements of nature seemed to combine in an attempt to prevent our further progress.

Once, when we had passed the Great Lakes and were nearly half-way to the Atlantic coast, our camp was overwhelmed by a terrific tropical storm.

We had made that camp on the crest of a hill, with our own canvas tents in the centre and a ring of hastily-built grass huts or shelters for the porters. Barnes and I were alone then, Lydford having left us, and we intended to allow ourselves a day or two of rest before going to look for elephants, which lived in large herds in the twelve-foot-high grass which grows abundantly in that district.

Suddenly, late in the afternoon, we noticed heavy black clouds gathering in the north-east, while the barometer fell, a mist covered the earth, and the departing sunlight, breaking through the mist, turned everything to yellowish green.

Everything became deathly still, without the slightest breeze. The atmosphere was so heavy that I became conscious of my breathing and my whole mind was overcast with a sense of threatening evil.

And then one flash of lightning broke the black clouds. Thunder rolled dully. A sudden breath of wind, cool in the midst of heat, struck us. The clouds were split again and again with forks of light, and a few large drops of rain fell.

Up to that moment, we had no expectation of anything more than an ordinary storm. And when the hurricane—heralded by a terrible and ominous sound—burst upon us, it did not last more than five minutes before all was once again peaceful and quiet, with the sun shining down. But those five minutes were among the most startling and awe-inspiring of my life.

Without any more warning than I have described, a wall of falling water seemed to advance up the hill against us. In a minute it was upon us, not merely rain, but huge hailstones. It was no affair of drops, but literally one of sheets—or rather one great sheet—of water, falling out of the sky, and split only by the stones of ice that fell with it. So heavy was it that my power of

ACROSS AFRICA

breathing seemed to stop and I was forced to my knees with lowered head.

We ran to our tents and the porters crouched in their grass shelters. Small comfort! Only a few seconds after the first coming of the rain, there followed a hurricane of wind. Down went tents, over went shelters, camp-chairs and all our impedimenta were blown across the ground, while I could do no more than try to protect my head from the heavier of the stones—which were quite large enough to bruise if not to stun me—and to try to shelter the cameras.

Our porters were terrified. Their huts were all in ruins, scattered on the ground; and among those ruins they lay, shrieking. The whole camp was destroyed in those five minutes and all that was left at the end of them was a medley of broken camp equipment, piles of soaked grass that had once been huts, two piles of limp, damp canvas lying over broken poles, a number of badly-scared natives, and two white men who no longer owned a single possession or stitch of clothing that was not soaked with rain.

Water provided us with one other adventure. This was right at the end of our journey, when we

wanted to go for some miles by water in an old whale-boat belonging to a mission. The boat looked serviceable enough and as we had previously been travelling for many days in native canoes, we hailed her as the forerunner of civilization. But we soon discovered that if she was indeed that, it must have been a decayed civilization, for no sooner had we got well out into mid-stream in the river, than the water came in, gently in some places and like small fountains in others. In fact, it was quickly so obvious that we should soon be submerged that not only we two passengers, but all the native crew except two men start to bail with a number of old tins that seemed to have been thoughtfully provided for the purpose; and even then it was touch and go.

However, eventually we landed safely at our destination. When we went ashore we instructed the crew to mend the boat because, having now travelled about four thousand miles, zigzagging across Africa, and having only another hundred miles to go, we felt that it would be inglorious as well as disappointing to be drowned. By the time we returned, we found that the job had been done: that is to say, a number of wooden pegs had been driven into the worst of the holes and the sprung seams had been covered with bits of cloth.

ACROSS AFRICA

The boat itself was now comparatively dry, and after a close inspection we agreed that if the journey did not last more than a few minutes and was conducted through entirely smooth water, we *might* remain afloat.

In any case there was no other means of returning upstream, so we took our seats and hoped for the best.

Coming downstream, the current, of course, had helped us and the surface had seemed smooth; but now that we tried to row against it we realized how strong that current was. Also we realized that there were dangerous-looking rocks. Our crew (as their methods of boatmending had suggested), were far from being first-rate watermen, and few of them knew how to manage a boat against a strong current. One of them soon caught a crab at a critical moment, and we discovered that the man at the tiller was seriously handicapping himself by having the tiller ropes crossed. Even when those matters were attended to, we made little progress and sometimes we seemed to be actually slipping backwards.

Then, of course, the cloth stoppings in the seams ceased to be effective, and a minute or two later two of the wooden pegs came right out—and the water came right in!

The difficulties we had fought on the outward journey were repeated, but they were far worse now, for we could not spare a single man from the oars and had to rely entirely on such baling as we could do ourselves. It was hard work; indeed, I can think of few occasions on which I have worked so furiously. And yet the water gained on us, filling up the bottom of the boat and rising towards the thwarts.

We knew that if the boat submerged, we were lost, for no man could swim in such a current. Accordingly we gave up all idea of proceeding on our boat journey and told the men to make for the shore; but we doubted if even that was possible, for the water-logged boat was now so heavy that the men could hardly move her, even when we got into the comparatively quiet water by the shore. However, we urged the men to super-human efforts and we added our weight to theirs by leaning forward and pushing at the oars. Then, just as we were deciding that we must change our tactics again and return to baling out the ever-increasing water, the boatman in the bow gave a cry that at last we were in shallow water. Two of the men jumped overboard and we grounded.

We hesitated then whether to abandon the boat

and make our way along the bank through very thick country, but at last we decided to bale her out completely, and make a fresh start, keeping close to the bank, out of the main current, and being ready to make at once for the shore if the water again threatened to get the better of us. We did the baling thoroughly, and wished the banks had not been too steep for us to drag her ashore, overturn her and drain her dry: and then we set out once more. The work was still fairly heavy, and it took us three hours and a half to reach our destination. But we had only one further adventure, though that might easily have proved disastrous.

We were rowing along steadily when suddenly water spouted up a few feet from our bow. Then there was another spout in mid-stream, and again one quite close to us. It was mysterious. Clearly it came from something under the surface. There were neither crocodiles nor hippo there and the splash was far too big for any fish to have caused it. Then it occurred again, and as I was looking over the side seeking the cause of the trouble, I saw exactly what was happening.

It was neither fish nor flesh, but a broken telegraph cable! A little above that point, a cable was stretched high on masts to cross the river.

Though all had been well as we passed down, in the interval it had snapped some little distance away and a long loop had fallen down into the water. There it trailed in the stream and the current stretched it to its full length: when it was taut it whipped back like a fisherman's line, rising as it came. So it had risen twice within a few feet of our boat. If it had struck us, the wire would undoubtedly have cut deep into the boards, and have made such a hole that we should have sunk immediately.

During the greater part of this expedition, Barnes and I kept together, except that as I have related I would sometimes be busy with my camera in a hide while he would prowl about the forest. But there was one occasion when we separated for several days.

We were in the heart of the elephant country and the people of a native village, seeing our guns and apparently having infinite confidence in the powers of the white man, came and begged us to stay and rid them of a pest—a very fierce old bull elephant which had for long destroyed both their crops and several of their people. I was not too keen on that job, because the more I did with

cameras the less I wanted to do with rifles. But we agreed that this was a case when we ought to give what help we could to the natives, and accordingly it was arranged that I should go on towards the Aremwimi River with the majority of the porters and all our baggage, while Barnes, with half a dozen men, should stay behind for a few days and try to dispose of the marauding elephant.

Barnes told me the story afterwards. The natives sent out scouts to try to locate the elephant and on the following day Barnes set out in pursuit. Besides his own porters he had a small local force, armed with spears as well as bows and arrows and fortunately they looked on him as a friend and deliverer. I say fortunately, because these people were cannibals: perhaps a step higher in the social scale than those who slew their enemies for the purpose of eating them, but equally unpleasant in practice because they ate the bodies of members of their own tribe who had died a natural death. The general custom, when anyone died, was to sell the body to the people of the next village, who, of course, returned the compliment when the occasion arose.

I once heard a discussion as to whether cannibalism improves the moral tone of a people or

deteriorates it. Of course, everyone has met the idea in mythology that the blood of a brave man puts courage into the man who drinks it, and I believe some cannibal tribes have the same idea about the flesh. But if that were so, I suppose the converse would be equally true, and since there are probably more cowards in the world than heroes, the bulk of a cannibal's diet would not be beneficial to him. In any case the hunters of this particular tribe certainly showed no great signs of courage and having once secured Barnes's help they were quite willing to leave everything to him. They acted cheerfully as scouts, but as soon as elephants were sighted they had a way of disappearing very quickly.

This soon happened, and Barnes found himself alone—except for a cow elephant who put her head through the trees and suddenly looked down on him. But the fact that an elephant looks at you is no sign that it has seen you—elephants' sight being notoriously poor and their knowledge relying chiefly on scent and hearing, which in turn depend on the direction of the wind—so Barnes very wisely refrained from firing at such close quarters and backed carefully away, when opportunity came, and overtook the native hunters.

A few minutes later the party was in the heart

of a very dense patch of forest, when squeals and trumpetings were heard, now on this side and now on that; then great moving shapes were seen first here, then there, and soon it became apparent that the men had somehow wandered right into the centre of a great herd, so that they were completely surrounded.

It was an uncomfortable predicament, because an attempt to escape would almost certainly have led to discovery and it seemed better to remain quiet and hope for the best. But although the elephants were at first quite unaware of the presence of men—since no wind was blowing—the discovery was very soon made, and as sometimes happens in uncomfortable predicaments in civilized cities, it was the wandering curiosity of an infant that caused all the trouble. A baby elephant, some four or five feet high, wandered away from its mother and came straight towards Barnes. Its mother quickly followed in search of it—and then when she saw the group of men and felt that her youngster was in danger, she at once charged.

Though she was certainly not the pest which Barnes was in search of, he had no choice then but to fire, particularly as a young bull was following just behind the cow. So he killed the mother elephant with his first shot and wounded

the bull with a second, and immediately there was pandemonium in the forest as all the rest of the herd trumpeted and squealed, uprooted trees and tore down branches in a rush which Barnes at first thought was an attack on him but which fortunately proved to be a headlong flight.

Back in the village that night, Barnes was asleep when he was aroused by natives with the news that elephants were surrounding the village. I think if I had been he I should have stayed where I was, because hunting elephants by moonlight is not a desirable occupation: the odds are all on the elephants. But Barnes rashly decided to go out and took with him two men in whom he felt he could put some reliance. He had started in confidence that he would be able to see sufficiently well in the moonlight to ensure good shooting; but he soon found that although that applied to the open village, it did not apply in the density of the forest, where there was no light at all. Still, he went on, and presently came out into a patch of open country. There they came suddenly upon three elephants, only fifty yards away, and a minute or two later they realized that there were others behind them. Once again they were surrounded, but now with the added danger that it was night.

To keep utterly still was the only chance. Barnes could hear the swish of leaves as the elephants moved their trunks and now and then a crack as a branch was broken. It was an eerie situation for the men who crouched there, never knowing when they would be discovered, but at least it did not last long, for soon the noises grew fainter and Barnes realized that the animals were moving off and that they were not likely to cross the spot where he was hidden.

The obvious thing then would have been to have gone back to the village; but Barnes still wanted to get the big bull who was the cause of all the trouble. So he went on. And then suddenly a native grabbed his arm and pointed. There, alone, stood an immense elephant, with tusks that reached nearly to the ground. It was so big that there could not, by all the laws of probability, have been another like it in the district, and none of the party entertained any doubt that this was the animal of which they were in search. In the moonlight it looked like a mammoth.

Then Barnes took careful aim and fired, twice. The first shot struck the elephant on the point of the shoulder, the second entered the body a little further back. The animal staggered and plunged

forward among a group of trees, where it showed again only for an instant as something black among the stems and leaves. But in that instant Barnes fired again, and with a mighty crash the elephant toppled to the ground.

That was the end of Barnes's experience as an elephant hunter. Since all his instincts were against shooting, I don't think he enjoyed it. Certainly he did not think his efforts anything to boast about and when we met again he assured me that hunting with a camera was far the better sport.

Barnes and I had a joint adventure with elephants in which a good deal of blood was shed—but it was not the blood of the elephants.

We were then in the heart of the elephant country and our guides had led us to a glade which we were told was crossed by the great creatures every day as they went down to a river. When we arrived we found unmistakable signs that a herd had passed through the glade that very morning and we decided to climb a tree. We each lay along a branch, ready to see what was to be seen.

Then we waited—and while we waited I sud-

denly felt something biting me on the calf of my leg. Looking round I saw ants—hundreds and thousands of ants—crawling up the tree-trunk towards us. Some were on our clothing already and again and again we felt sudden pain as they buried their short, sharp nippers in our flesh. There was only one way of getting rid of them, and that was to pull them off one by one, "like boys picking berries," as Barnes said. But removing the insects did not immediately remove the pain and anyhow it was quite impossible to pick them off anything like fast enough. They were all over us: crawling up our sleeves, clambering down our necks and over our faces. An extra sharp prick would make me leave those on my legs and grab at my ear, and then a second later my hands would dart back to my legs.

Barnes was in a similar predicament, and for long we thought of nothing but those terrible insects. Of course, the easiest course would have been to leave the tree; but then we should have had to leave also the chance of getting our elephant pictures. We weren't going to do that, particularly after a native had told us that the animals were browsing only about two hundred yards away. Once I climbed higher up the tree, partly to get a little relief from the biting and

partly to ascertain whether the report was true, and from there I had a perfect view of a magnificent elephant—but alas, he was out of camera range. And I gained little in the other way from my climb, because the ants came with me: I do not mean that they followed as fast as I climbed, but I carried them, unwillingly, on my body, biting as they went.

By this time they were in our hair and in our beards (we grew beards in the jungle) and I caught one intrepid ant in the very act of crawling up my nose! And just at that moment, four or five young cow elephants came out from among the trees and began to walk slowly towards a patch of bushes not thirty yards away.

Of course there was no question of what to do then. Insects might crawl and bite, but our job was to take photographs, and for the next few minutes I was almost too busily occupied with the camera to feel the pain. Ants seemed to be running races up and down my legs, up and down my arms—and still I must concentrate on securing cinematograph pictures.

But the elephants were suspicious and did not stay, so we bundled out of the tree and when we reached the ground we started to tear off clothes, to get directly at the invaders. We did not even

bother about our cameras and other possessions: we did not even think of the possibility of the elephants returning, or of buffalo or anything else attacking us. To get rid of clothes, and then to get rid of ants, was our only thought.

These are some of the adventures that beset us as we crossed Africa. For the rest we had long, weary tramps, wonderful nights in camp after the day's work, the satisfaction of having worked our way for over four thousand miles across Africa, and a marvellous collection of photographs of African animals, birds, reptiles and insects. And I, above all, had added still more to my knowledge of that wonderful continent—a knowledge which was to stand me in good stead in later years.

CHAPTER SEVEN

“BOYS”

BOYS, we are accustomed to say, will be boys. But in Central Africa that does not always follow: there, “boys” will frequently be grown men and fathers of families.

I do not know when the word first got this special meaning; probably the first white explorers and settlers employed natives for more or less menial tasks and called them “boys” in a somewhat derogatory sense, because they were doing work that was not usually given to men. In any case, the word is now invariably used for a personal servant, whether he be employed by a settler as house-boy or cook, or by a traveller as “batman,” gun-bearer or camera-bearer. It is not rightly used of the men of native tribes when they are engaged in their own occupations, but it can apply to natives when they leave their tribe to act as porters who carry boxes and tent equipment, on the road, though these men are usually regarded as being of a lower social order than the more personal servants of white people.

There are class distinctions among the African natives as everywhere else, and although the personal boys will often play with the porters of the camp, it is done somewhat condescendingly, like big boys at a school amusing themselves with “a few of the kids.” My boys used to gamble with the porters (knowing that their own superior intelligence would make them certain of winning) and now and then a boy would play a practical joke on a porter, such as trying to drown him in a stream. But generally speaking the relation between the two was that described by one of my boys when he told me—on every convenient occasion—that he and I were “men” while the porters were merely “savages.”

Among all the boys who have accompanied me on my various expeditions, one of the most remarkable was called Mac. At least, I called him that (I no longer know why) although his real name was Mahomet. He was a Somali and when I first met him he was really a boy, being only about thirteen years old. He was then employed as boy to the Serang or overseer of the firemen on board a ship in which I was travelling down the Red Sea. I was looking down into the well of the ship one day, when I saw him running along beneath me, a cheerful little urchin, slinging

ribald jokes over his shoulder as he ran. Something about him appealed to me—perhaps it was the fact that he *could* make jokes in that heat—and when next I saw him I asked him his name. I found that he could speak English—well, something, at any rate, that would pass for English. Much of it was perfectly intelligible, but now and then he would so drastically misuse a word as to make nonsense of what he was saying. Months later, for example, when he had become my personal boy, and like a well-trained servant, was passing soup to my guests at the camp dinner-table, he succeeded—with less evidence of good training—in spilling one plate of soup completely down someone's neck. His previous painful experience having shown him what happened when "masters" were annoyed, he leant forward, looked solicitously up into his victim's face and began to plead for himself. "Don't be sorry, sir," he said.

After a very few conversations on that ship in the Red Sea, Mac—as I had already begun to call him—showed a liking for me that was comparable to mine for him; and soon he disclosed the desire of his heart, which was to accompany me to Central Africa. I did not give an immediate answer, and then after we left Aden I missed him.

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Making enquiries, I found that all the firemen, together with the Serang, were signed off at Aden and a new lot signed on for the rest of the voyage. So Mac must have gone ashore, I thought, and that was the end of his dreams. But I didn't then know him: he was made of sterner stuff than that. He had indeed gone ashore, very unwillingly, at Aden, but then he had crept back, at night, and had continued the voyage in the hold, as a stowaway.

In due course he was discovered, and imprisoned. But again he escaped, this time overboard, at Mombassa. Somehow he made his way to Nairobi, arriving there as soon as I did, and then he came to me and begged to be allowed to enter my service. I thought that I couldn't do better than take him—and I was right.

He was in many respects a good servant, and certainly a faithful one. I came to like him very much. Yet I can hardly call him “good” in the more exact sense of the word, for he was a thorough rascal, always in trouble, always getting up to mischief.

He came, so he was fond of telling me, of good family, his father having been a kind of sheik in Somaliland, and the owner of many camels. Then, when Mac was a small child, the trouble

with the Mad Mullah had come and the Mullah (whom Mac always called the "Mad Muddler") had taken off four hundred of the camels and later had put the sheik to the sword before his son's eyes. After that the family was outcast and went down and down in the social and monetary scale until the young head of the house appeared as personal boy to the overseer of a gang of Red Sea firemen. Or so Mac told me. Whether the story was any more true than some others that he told me, I cannot say.

But certainly the last part was authentic, and I have no doubt that it was from the Red Sea firemen that Mac derived many of his less prepossessing qualities. His overpowering vice was gambling. Although he regarded himself as being socially superior to the porters of my safari, he had no objection to playing cards with them and winning their money—and he knew that his greater sharpness would make that fairly easy. Night after night he would play until the last of their few rupees had passed into his own pocket. Then, of course, there was trouble in the camp; the porters would either complain to me, or else show an air of dissatisfaction which meant a bad day's work. Sometimes I interfered and threw the cards in the fire, but there was no stopping Mac

from gambling: although we might be many miles from civilization, in some strange way he always managed to procure another pack within a day or two.

Once I sent him to Naivasha to buy something and to collect the mail, giving him two rupees for the purpose. He ought to have been back at six in the evening, but he was two hours late and when at last he came he was empty-handed. I asked what had happened and he at once began to cry (a favourite and easy trick of his, but one that lost its power on me after the first week) and to explain that instead of going to Naivasha he had met some friends who had “compelled” him to stop and play cards with them; and that having thus lost both my rupees, he had been unable to execute my commissions. I then assumed a countenance and voice of great ferocity and threatened him with a flogging—and immediately, with further tears, Mac told the true story, producing from the folds of his clothes as he did so, not merely my two rupees but also six others: he had indeed gambled with my money, but his usual luck had held and he had turned the two into eight.

Mac had both the natural weapons of persuasion—tears and temper. When one failed, he

used the other. After all, he was just a child. Once he met his match at gambling in a young Masai named Aero—of whom I shall write later—and because this was an unaccustomed experience it upset him greatly. He couldn't take his defeat in a sporting way. He accused Aero of cheating and a great argument ensued, in the course of which Aero made counter-charges against Mac. After a great deal of quarrelling, the dispute was referred to me. Aero kept his head and his temper and explained everything lucidly and—incidentally—politely; but Mac gesticulated and jabbered hysterically, shed his tears and behaved like a spoilt child. And when I decided against him he stormed at me, accusing me of favouritism and I don't know what else.

But as so often happens with our own children of this type, the tempers never lasted and by the next morning if not earlier, Mac would be penitent and would come to me with a really quite charming expression on his face, in which a smile lingered just out of sight, ready to appear at the first sign of my forgiveness.

Mac had two other predominant vices—vanity and cruelty. The first of these is really a racial fault. Perhaps it is merely a virtue taken to excess. At any rate it would remain dormant for a long

time and then would suddenly come to the surface, beginning ordinarily enough with the fact that we were camping on the bank of a river, which permitted the natives to wash their clothes—what they had of them. They would do this with great thoroughness and then would begin an orgy of hair-cutting, the men taking it in turn to be barber and victim. I think “victim” is really the right word for the hair was usually scraped off with the sharp edge of a broken piece of glass. Then on other parts of the head, where the hair was left long, it would be smeared with a horrible-looking mixture of red earth and grease—after which the dandified native would strut about the camp like a turkey-cock, exhibiting himself to anyone who cared to look. Mac would go through a similarly elaborate process and then station himself just outside my tent, so as to make sure that I did not fail to admire him.

Then there were times when he became the owner of some resplendent clothes—boots in particular. He was a happy and proud boy then, at any rate for the first mile or two. The trouble was that the only source of cast-off boots in the neighbourhood was myself, and my boots were many sizes too large for Mac. Undeterred by that, he would put them on and march in them—a

most important person, with his head high in the air and a look of utter contempt on his face whenever he caught the eye of a barefooted porter. But after a while that look would dwindle and eventually it would be replaced by an expression of pain—as the boots began to chafe his feet. He would bear it for a remarkably long time—there is nothing like vanity for helping one to put up with discomfort—but finally it would become insupportable. Then he would become cunning. With supreme self-mastery he would smooth his face into the old look of adulation and go up to some innocent-minded porter and persuade him that the finest thing in the world was to wear boots. The porter, having just as strong a germ of vanity in his own blood, would almost invariably fall to Mac's wiles, and in a little while the porter would be proudly strutting along in ill-fitting boots, while Mac, with an expression of great relief, would wrap his own chafed feet in the puttees which he had obtained in exchange, while again and again he would stop to count the coins which he had obtained as the additional part of the purchase price.

It is odd that in spite of these painful experiences, boots never failed to attract him and he would get up to all sorts of tricks to obtain them. Having

grasped that I would only give him some when they were no longer fit for me to wear myself, he once set to work to fulfil that condition by artificial means. A pair of good brown boots had got very wet when we marched through a morass; so when he had cleaned them Mac purposely put them much too close to the fire, so that they lost their shape and shrank until they were quite useless. Then he came to me with tears in his eyes and apologies on his lips—and guile in his heart. As it happened, however, I knew all about this little plot, for—when too late to save the boots—I had overheard Mac explaining it to another boy. So I gave him a severe reprimand for spoiling the boots—and then kept them. The disappointment in his face as he left the tent with his eyes fixed longingly on the boots was really very funny.

Mac was a very devout Mohammedan and although he was not very good at keeping rules made by myself he certainly kept those of his religion. Once he, the cook, and the headman, formed a conspiracy to steal a chicken: I think it was Mac himself who undertook the most dangerous part of the enterprise in return for the privilege of cutting the bird's throat—that being an essential matter from his point of view, since neither of the others was a Mohammedan and he

could only eat meat if the throat was cut at the hands of a True Believer before the animal was dead.

Having got possession of the chicken, they took turns to carry it, alive, on the day's march and then they tied it to a stake while they waited for dinner-time. Unfortunately I saw it, then, and as it was in obvious distress and some pain (being tied by the leg) I took my gun and shot it. Mac jumped to his feet at once, snatched up the chicken, broke the string which fastened it to the stake, and ran shrieking round the camp in search of a knife. All his happiness, all the great feast to which he had looked forward through the day's march, depended on his finding a knife and plunging it into the bird's throat while it was still alive. Alas! I am a good shot. The bird was certainly dead even before Mac reached it, and since his capacity for lying did not stretch to the confines of his religion, he could not possibly pretend, by the time he found a knife, that he had had anything to do with its decease. So that evening the cook and the headman enjoyed an ample meal—while poor Mac mournfully devoured his rice and ghee.

Perhaps it was this strength of character—combined with certain sadistic leanings—which made

him very useful to me as a disciplinarian. One of my porters was definitely not up to his work—he was lazy and did not do his share. So one day Mac decided to punish him. At least, I hope that that was all his intention, and that the fact that the porter would certainly have died under the treatment if I had not interfered was one which Mac had not realized. In any case Mac persuaded the porter to let him teach him to swim—and the unfortunate pupil was all but drowned when I rescued him.

Possibly I wrong Mac in thinking that he had murderous intentions: it may be that after all he only intended to give this “werry bad boy” a severe scare—and that, I must admit, is a very sound plan in dealing with refractory natives and one which I have myself several times adopted. There was one man whom I employed as camp guard. After a while I became convinced that at night, instead of doing his job as watchman, he used to sit in my chair by the camp-fire and go to sleep. Now, if a man has the habit of sleeping on sentry-duty, he won’t be cured by being fined or by any ordinary punishment: he does it because he hasn’t sufficient self-control to keep awake and the only way to reinforce that self-control is to add the idea of fear to it. (This was proved again

and again during the war. There were men who were almost physically incapable of keeping awake on look-out—in quiet spots: but they were always alert enough when a raid was expected.) So I determined to convince him that minding camp wasn't always the safe job that he imagined it to be.

I told Mac and another boy to keep watch. At four in the morning they awakened me, with the news that the guard was sound asleep in my chair—so sound asleep that they had been able to take away his rifle without waking him. I took the rug off my bed, crept up behind the man, flung the rug over his head, and tilted him backwards. At the same time I dug my fingers, through the rug, into his neck—and growled like a lion. (Perhaps I should say here that my repertoire as a mimic of African animals is both extensive and successful.)

If the man yelled, I did not hear it through the folds of the rug, but after a minute I realized, with horror, that he was lying limp in my hands. I was afraid I had gone too far; but when I lifted off the rug and shook him, he groaned. I think it is certain that up to that moment he had been convinced that a lion had got him and that his last moment had come. Then the boys began to laugh and I suppose the truth dawned on him. In any



THE PORTERS ACTED SCENES IN WHICH I WAS THE CHIEF CHARACTER.



“DRESSING UP.”
MAC AND A FRIEND.



I INSTRUCT A YOUNG ACTOR.

case the experience had a most salutary effect, and I should be greatly surprised if he ever slept at his post again: indeed, he became so active a guard that on one occasion when a lion suddenly appeared on the opposite side of the fire, he shot at it *right across the camp*—and the bullet nearly got me as I lay in a tree half a mile away, taking flashlight photographs beside a pool!

There was another occasion when I had to play a practical joke on my boys—or rather to counter one of theirs with one of my own. This was when food was short and we were all on half-rations. We were seeking for lions and in my keenness I had pushed rather farther from my base than I would otherwise have done, always promising myself that each day's march should be the last before the homeward trek. The boys and porters looked askance at these advances and no doubt thought that I was mad. Finally, they decided to give me visible proof that I was running undue risks—risks of starvation for the whole camp.

One morning I came out of my tent to see all the porters ranged in a procession, with my favourite camera-boy, Killinjui, and another boy at their head. Killinjui looked preternaturally solemn and I wondered what on earth could have happened.

The procession halted outside my tent, the ranks parted, and there was disclosed what appeared to be the dead body of a porter. Feeling somewhat alarmed, I looked at Killinjui and asked what had happened. The boy, who understood English but could not speak it, shook his head very solemnly and began to rub his tummy. Immediately all the porters turned up their eyes with expressions of pain and rubbed the same portion of their anatomy—the implication being, of course, that this unfortunate porter had died of starvation, the victim of my madness and cruelty. The “corpse” lay on its side with its head turned away from me—a suspicious circumstance in itself—and I imagined, though I could not be absolutely certain, that this was a hoax. So I decided to put the matter to the test. Kneeling down, I put my hand on the porter’s wrist and by locating his pulse immediately discovered him to be very much alive. Then I turned to the assembled natives and said: “Well, at any rate you will now all have plenty of food.” Then I drew my hunting-knife and bent over the body so that the “corpse,” if his eyes were open, could not fail to see the blade. I asked Killinjui which part he would like, at the same time announcing that for my own part I intended to begin with a leg. As

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I said that I drew back the knife out of the “corpse’s” sight and gave the fleshy part of the uppermost leg a sharp nip with my finger-nails—and the porter leapt to his feet with a yell and bolted, his hand clasped to the spot at which he imagined I had begun to cut him.

There was no more trouble with those men after that. It was, in fact, the greatest joke, and one which they all—except perhaps the “corpse”—thoroughly enjoyed. Later I saw them acting the scene amongst themselves and all roaring with laughter.

Natives are great actors. Many a time I have stood unperceived behind a tree while the porters acted scenes in which I was the chief character. Myself with the “black box” (as they called my reflex camera)—myself crawling along the ground after game—myself fiddling with the tripod (realistically contrived out of three sticks tied together with grass)—and always best of all a real representation of myself when a native would be padded out on the most obvious parts of his body in imitation of my bulk: all these imitations were never-failing sources of merriment to the natives round their evening camp-fire. And I must say that I got quite as much amusement as anyone from it all.

Once I thought I would give a little histrionic performance on my own. I had been out photographing with no one but Killinjui and Aero, the Masai spearman, and did not return to camp till after dark. I suggested to Killinjui and Aero that we should play a trick on the porters, so we all crept very quietly into the shelter of a big bush just outside the camp. From there I could get a good view and—as a precaution—I made sure that the camp guard was at some distance from his rifle. Then I banged my feet and puffed like a charging rhinoceros (another of my successful imitations), dashing myself against the bush so as to make as much noise as possible.

Immediately the most terrible yelling started all round the camp and within about two seconds every man jack of those porters had climbed into the thorn-trees! We then walked quietly from behind the bush into the light of the camp-fires.

It took the porters some minutes to realize how their legs had been pulled, and when finally they climbed down from their perches they looked very sheepish; but then Aero and Killinjui started a pantomime, imitating the whole scene and in particular the antics of one or two men who had looked particularly comic in their haste to clamber to safety—and very soon everyone was laughing.

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Perhaps this is an appropriate place to mention that one of the names by which the natives used to call me was Bwana Cheka—*He Who Makes Laughter*. Some of my jokes used occasionally to cause a little individual soreness at first: but always even the victims of them used to join in the merriment and everyone would be happy. The African native is usually a sportsman at heart, and quite ready to take a joke against himself.

It was not always I who started these jokes, though there is an imp of devilment in me which has led me to do my share. One afternoon during my first expedition I was making a platform in a tree in order to take photographs from it at night, the work consisting of tying six-foot poles to out-jutting branches with long, pliable strips of thorn-bark. While Aero and I were at work, some of the porters were just under the tree, and amongst them was a man of the Kavarondo tribe who—even more than most natives—was particularly scared of snakes. This man happened to stand for a moment just under Aero, and I saw a wicked smile pass over the Masai’s face. Then he dropped a strip of the wet, slimy bark straight on to the Kavarondo’s neck.

A minute before the man, who was a light-

hearted fellow, had been singing at his work. Now he was immediately convinced that he was caught by a python—and indeed, the first sensation must have been very suggestive of that. The poor fellow let out yell after yell. He did not look round but simply bolted—straight into the thorn-bush which proved quite impenetrable and simply threw him back. Then he turned round and bolted in the opposite direction, again blindly into more thorn-bush: by then the strip of bark had fallen off, but his fears remained and he did not stop till he reached the camp.

Aero was about twenty when I first knew him—a very brave man who had already killed a lion single-handed and consequently wore the lion-manè head-dress which was the mark of that distinction in his tribe.

Twice he saved my life.

The first time was when I was walking in open country with a little party of five natives about fifteen yards behind me. I was admiring the view of Kilimanjaro in the distance, and was, I am afraid, rather more preoccupied than I ought to have been. Consequently, I failed to give adequate attention to what seemed to be a mound—like a low, elongated ant-hill—a little way ahead. But it wasn't an ant-hill—it was a rhinoceros, and it

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suddenly revealed its identity by getting to its feet and charging me.

I shouted a warning to the natives and dashed for a group of trees several yards away on my left. I do not think I could possibly have reached them before the rhino overtook me if it had not been for Aero: quick as thought, he sprang between the animal and me so as to put two scents in the path where only one had been a second before. This confused the rhino so that it hesitated: and with the lead of those invaluable instincts I reached the trees and scrambled into one of them. Then my second spearman, seeing that it was now Aero whom the rhino had turned to pursue, sprang forward and drove his spear, almost to the haft, into the animal's body. At that the animal turned to retaliate, but Aero (who in the meantime had succeeded in reaching a tree) immediately came back and speared the animal on the other side.

It must be remembered that these spearmen carry but one spear each and a short sword; so that if a man strikes and loses his spear in inflicting wounds that are not immediately fatal, he is entirely disarmed except for the sword. Neither of these spear-wounds had killed the rhino, and but for the fact that they weakened and confused it and prevented it from choosing one

enemy and finishing him off, I have little doubt that the day would have ended in tragedy. But when the rhino tossed about, turning first this way and then that, one of the spears was dislodged from its body—and Aero promptly seized it and plunged it in, to make a new, and this time fatal, wound.

The other occasion on which Aero saved me was very different though it showed quite as much courage. Again we were in rhino country, crossing a flat and exceedingly dreary plain under the burning sun.

For some days I had been down with fever and dysentery and was half delirious with a temperature of 104 degrees. An added difficulty was that we were short of water and unable to find any pools that were not oozy with unpleasant-looking mud. Then, one evening, news came of good water some distance away and I was carried—I could no longer walk—towards it.

That was a nightmare of a march. Part of the time I think I was barely conscious, and even when aware of my surroundings I was past caring about them. Lions might have got me, or rhino could have charged the little procession of porters round me—I could have done nothing and did not feel that I should mind. And yet I did mind when

one of the four porters who bore me missed his footing and the bed gave an awful lurch, so that I seemed to fall into a bottomless pit. And I did mind when I cried aloud for water and there was none for anyone to give me.

Then it was that Aero came to my rescue. Vaguely I had been aware for some hours that he was not with me. He was devoted to me, I knew, and at first he had been constantly attentive—I had heard his voice encouraging the porters and urging them to step cautiously, I had felt his hands straightening the pillow under my head, I had been conscious of his presence continually. And then I missed him. No one knew where he had gone. I did not—could not—believe that he had deserted me, and yet he wasn’t there. Or rather, he would appear beside me when two rhino and a lion were about to spring on to my bed, his arm would be upraised, and then, just at the moment when his spear should have shot forward, he would vanish—and I would turn over, awake, with my mouth parched and only a great longing for water filling my whole body.

And then, at the end of another such terrible dream, he was really there, not defending me with his spear, but pouring between my lips something incredibly cool and soft and delicious—milk!

I did not know then how or where he had obtained it. I merely lay back in utter thankfulness, for without a doubt it was that milk that saved my life. Only later, after I had made a quick recovery, did I hear the story of all that Aero had done for me.

To a native, however brave he may be, there is nothing more terrible than travelling *alone* at night. But shortly before dark Aero had realized that I would die unless something was done very promptly to save me. The only thing that he could think of was to give me milk—and the only way of obtaining milk was to find a kraal of his own people, the Massai. So he set out. He did not take one of the porters with him because he despised them—this was a task for a warrior. And he would not wait for daylight because he feared that I would die.

The dangers were partly imaginary—from the spirits which a native dreads in the darkness—but as night came on they were extremely real to him. And in addition, there were others which were very real indeed—man-eating lions and rhino. In that country, only shortly before, I had counted fourteen rhino in a day; and a few days later Aero himself and another Massai were mauled by a lioness. Yet Aero went through the night

alone in search of milk for me, found it, and came back in time to save my life.

The dangers that beset such men as he in the African bush were ever present, and alas! before I next returned to Africa he had been killed by a lion.

There was another occasion when my life was but narrowly saved during an attack of fever, though then it was my own wits which I had to thank.

This was at the time when Barnes left me to go elephant-hunting in the Congo forests. Soon after he departed I was taken ill and my misery was considerably increased by the fact that the people of the neighbouring native village were cannibals. Numbers of them had a most unpleasant way of coming and gazing at me as I lay helpless in bed—rather like the way the farmer looks at the turkey. What was more, my boy reported to me that he had overheard scraps of their conversation from which he gathered that they proposed to murder us both—and eat us.

Clearly something drastic had to be done. Thinking it over, I recalled how I had once badly scared a party of natives by doing a little conjuring trick with a set of false teeth—the counterpart of an incident in Sir Rider Haggard’s book *King*

Solomon's Mines—and I began to wonder if I could not similarly invoke something which would be taken for spiritual powers on this occasion.

I told my boy to get out my flashlight apparatus and fix it up a few yards in front of my tent, leading a wire to the contact button which I hid under my blankets. These preparations aroused a good deal of interest and by the time they were finished about half the population of the village was gathered in a circle around us. Then, with my boy acting as interpreter, I made a speech from my bed—in the best Haggard style—dwelling on the marvellous powers of the white man and saying that by simply raising my arm I could call from heaven a great fire which would burn them all. Black faces aren't very expressive, and it was difficult to see how they took this; but I think they were impressed. I then said that I would prove my words, but that as I didn't at the moment want to kill them *all*, they had better stand a little farther back. Then I got them just where I wanted them—not near enough to be scorched, but yet sufficiently close to feel the heat.

“Ye doubt the white man's power,” I said. “Then see!” And I threw up my right hand, while at the same instant I pressed the button with my left. There was a terrific boom and a blinding

flash. The natives tumbled over each other in their efforts to escape, yelling and screaming. And then there was silence. No one came near us again that night. We remained uneaten, and the power of the white man was established.

But if the white man can at times appear to have powers of magic, certainly the natives can produce equally remarkable effects of their own. For one thing there is their drum language, by means of which news is sent for hundreds of miles. But apart from that, there is no doubt in my mind that the natives of Africa are able to learn of events happening at a distance without any physical apparatus at all. How they do it is a mystery—I fancy it will always remain one. It may be telepathy. I do not know. But the fact remains that they do have a knowledge of events which by the ordinary laws of existence they could not possibly have acquired.

After my first expedition to Africa I returned a good deal earlier than I had intended to do. No one in Africa knew—or at least, I supposed that no one knew—of my coming. On landing at Mombasa I sent a wire to a man named Grigg, the manager of a trading company at Nairobi, asking him to start collecting porters for me. The next day after he had met me at the station I

was surprised to see in his yard half a dozen boys, including Killinjui, who had been with me on my previous expedition. I congratulated Grigg on the remarkable speed at which he had collected them. He answered: "Oh no, it's not my doing. They've been here five days."

Then he explained that five days before—at which time I was on the ocean—these natives had come to the store. When he told them to go away as there would be no more safaris for some time, they said: "The Big Bwana Motto (which is one of my nicknames), is coming." "Rubbish," said Grigg, but the natives persisted and said they would wait for me. Then for five days Grigg teased them each day when he saw them in a little tent which they had pitched on some neighbouring waste land; and each day they answered: "Wait. He is coming."

On the fifth day, they appeared very jubilant and said: "He has come. He is in the train." Grigg laughed and called them fools. Then my telegram of the previous day (which had been delayed *en route*) was handed to him: and within a few hours I arrived.

Other men, I know, have had similar experiences, equally mysterious and incomprehensible. Those natives not only knew, at a time

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when I was in a ship at sea, that I was coming to Africa, but they knew it with such certainty that they waited five days for me without entertaining any doubts about it. And they were right.

The African native is a remarkable creature. He is intensely faithful to those he likes (I have had the experience of waking out of an attack of fever and finding two of my boys weeping by my bedside), he has courage, and withal he has a sense of humour even if it is not always of a very subtle kind. Knowing him well, I like and admire him.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ADVENTURES OF A WAR CORRESPONDENT

WHEN I returned to England in June 1914, after my journey across Africa, I felt that I deserved a holiday; and I therefore felt myself very lucky when Sir James Barrie invited me to a grouse shoot in Skye.

This invitation was really a remarkable instance of sportsmanship. It came about when Barrie and George Bernard Shaw came together to see me, and I told them about the wonderful medical mission work which was being done in Uganda and the Congo. I dispatiated on the way these men worked without any thought of reward, and then I brought in one of my pet subjects—the fact that rewards and honours and titles are given to the stay-at-home figureheads, many of whom do nothing that is even remotely worth doing, while the men who take their coats off and do the work are completely overlooked. I let myself go on this subject and spoke of the value which I consequently put upon titles as they are given nowadays. Suddenly Shaw started roaring with



TOILET.



BREAKFAST.



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laughter, as if I had made the greatest joke in the world. For the life of me I couldn't see what was so funny about it, and I went on with my diatribe, while Shaw continued to chuckle and Barrie sat very quiet. Soon Shaw got up and went to keep an appointment, and then I asked Barrie what the joke had been. He put me off without an answer and then produced the invitation to Skye. And it wasn't till after he had gone that I learned that he had been knighted only a month or two before, while I had been in Africa.

In spite of my discomfiture, I had every intention of keeping the appointment—and I have no doubt whatsoever that Barrie would have remained completely and ideally tactful. But the visit never came off because the War swept down upon us and altered all our private plans for the next four years.

At that time I was a director and the largest shareholder in a small company called The Warwick Trading Co., which produced the first film gazette ever seen in this country. We took cinematograph films of all the principal topical events and although, of course, we could not manage the world-wide sweep of pictures that can be seen to-day in any news theatre, we managed to keep the gazette filled with items of interest.

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For instance, when the King and Queen went to France shortly before the War, we arranged for Huck, the then famous airman, to carry one of our operators so that we could have pictures of the ship, taken from the air, as it crossed the Channel. First we got a picture of His Majesty inspecting the Guard of Honour at Dover. That was at twelve o'clock. Then there were views of the ship and escort in the Channel, and finally a few feet of film of the King and Queen landing at Calais. Then the aeroplane flew back to Hendon—and the film was shown at the Coliseum at half-past four the same afternoon. Even now, I believe, people marvel at the speed of the cinematographists when pictures of “the great fight” are shown the same day: yet we were doing the same thing in 1914.

When the War came, we leapt at the chance offered to us and started a supplement to our gazette, called *The Whirlpool of War*. Of course, we had rivals, but we had experience and a ready-made machinery, and I think it is beyond question that our films were the most successful—in speed of presentation as well as quality—of those which were shown to the public in the early days of the fighting, before the days of war correspondents came to an end. They were first shown at the

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Palace Theatre by arrangement with Sir Alfred Butt.

Of course, my own first idea when war broke out was to get into the thick of things. I heard that the Flying Corps wanted men who had had air experience and who were also good rifle-shots. That description fitted me, so I went to the recruiting-office in St. Martin's Lane—only to learn that no more men were wanted. I then went on to the War Office where some optimist gave me the same reply. This seemed to me so astonishing that I promptly launched out into a prophecy of how long the War would last and how many men would eventually be needed. The officer smiled happily and bowed me out. I wonder how soon he ceased to be so sure.

But since it appeared that I wasn't wanted in the army, I returned to business and very soon I was myself taking an active part in the taking of films for *The Whirlpool of War*. I made a series of weekly trips to Belgium, making my way by car to various parts of the line and getting as close to things as I could—so close, in fact, that more than once I was in imminent risk of capture. Of course, I had to be unarmed and to remember that I was a non-combatant, so that if I had met the enemy surrender would have been my only chance. I

reached the outskirts of Louvain and went into Namur just before it was captured. I worked down to Dinant and later, when all that territory was in German hands, I went out through Termonde and Alost with the idea of reaching Brussels—but, fortunately for myself, I received news when I was a few miles from the city which made me change my mind.

There were heartrending sights in Belgium in those days. One could seldom approach a town or village without meeting a long stream of refugees—young wives pushing barrows on which were piled all sorts of household possessions with one or two small children perched on top, while older children ran along clinging to their mother's skirts and the old grandmother and grandfather trudged behind, very likely pushing between them a perambulator across which a mattress would droop on either side. Some of these people had walked many miles, coming as they thought to safety and then finding, after a short night's rest, that the German advance guard had pressed quickly on, so that there was no haven of safety and they must trudge, trudge on. As I looked at their worn faces, I used to wonder in what they still found hope and to think how suddenly, how devastatingly, life had changed for them from

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the peaceful routine of life in small rooms behind shops or in the parlours of farms to this despairing flight. And then, from the dust-covered face of a young mother, weeping from sheer fatigue as she walked, I would glance up to the pyramid of household goods that filled the heavy barrow, and there I would see a little girl, excited with the novelty of adventure, laughing and chattering. But that was only when one of these families was still on its first day's march: after that, even the children despaired and youngsters of three or four would sit staring back down the long straight road by which they had come, with grime on their faces and fixed eyes and expressions which one hated, more than anything, to see in children.

On the day when I went to Alost, I passed some thousands of these pitiable refugees and then as I came near the outskirts of the town the stream trickled out with long gaps between belated parties and finally one very old man, alone, who came uncertainly down the road, stopping twice to look behind him as if he doubted whether there was any point in trying to live.

So I came to the deserted town. I saw a mongrel dog sniffing at refuse thrown into the street outside a shop and a black and white cat very peacefully washing itself on top of a wall: and the bodies

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of two men and a woman, lying in the road where they had been killed by a German shell.

I hurried down the streets, making for the further outskirts because from there the sound of gunfire came and I had been told that I should find a Belgian battery at work. But I very soon found that what I was hearing was not gun-fire but bursting shells, for the German were shelling the tower of the town hall and several church steeples under the impression that they were being used as observation posts. And before I had been in the town for half an hour, I found that the German guns had moved nearer and shells were passing overhead in search of some further objective.

I got busy with my cinematograph camera and secured some fine pictures of shell explosions against a tower. Then I moved on, looking for fresh subjects for photography, but always with my eyes and ears alert for shells falling in the road around me. Once I came upon the body of a man lying across the pavement and something prompted me to go closer and peer down into his face . . . and I started in amazement as I realized that this unknown Belgian was the exact double of myself—height, build, features and even clothes were exactly the same!

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Perhaps it was that which brought me to full consciousness of the fact that if I lingered longer the chances were that in a few minutes I too should be stretching my length in the roadway. Or perhaps I could no longer stand the loneliness of that town. Never have I known anything to equal that feeling. I have been by myself in the heart of the African bush without any painful consciousness of being alone, and I have walked for hours on the Yorkshire moors without seeing or hearing a soul and have been completely happy. But in that deserted Belgian town, a great sense of loneliness came to me which was quite different from the loneliness of the moors or the bush. It came from the sight of empty houses and all the signs of abandoned homes. A broken chair outside an empty house in an empty street means not the absence of people—which may be peaceful and pleasant, but the departure of people—which is cruel and sorrowful.

I had such thoughts in my mind as I turned back through those strange, silent streets—for there was a silence in them which persisted and made itself *felt* despite the crashing of the shells. And then, suddenly, I came upon a little square with a decorated bandstand in the middle of it, where doubtless young men and women had

formerly held hands in the evenings and fat, elderly matrons had sat placidly listening to military bands—and there, quite startlingly, I once again found signs of life.

Drawn up beside the bandstand was a British ambulance, and two young men were going from house to house looking for casualties. The driver of the ambulance was a girl. She had taken off her khaki cap and stood unconcernedly tidying her hair while a shell burst with a great crash on the pavé in one corner of the square. In those days we weren't so accustomed to the coolness of women as we are now, and I expected her to dart into the ambulance or underneath it. Instead, she began very leisurely to stroll towards the place where the shell had dropped. Soon she picked up a ring-shaped fragment of metal, finding it still hot and passing it quickly from one hand to the other till it cooled. Then she came across the square to me and asked for a piece of string: she wanted, she said, to hang the piece of shell from her neck "for luck."

It was ordinary enough, that incident: but that was its charm. I had been thinking of death and deserted homes and silent streets—and then, suddenly, under the decorations of that homely bandstand I met a typical English girl, who smiled with

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unconcern and chatted to me rather as if we had met at a garden party. And somehow that made me realize that even war and all its horrors didn't stop all ordinary events, and that one day shells and bullets would be forgotten and that girl, older and more experienced but at heart the same, would return to some English country house and garden, while I, if the War left me unscathed, would go back to Africa and the lions and elephants and my beloved cameras. Somehow, the memory of that little incident stood me in very good stead during the next four years.

Just beyond that square, a shell burst close to me in the roadway, and I darted into a doorway, finding to my horror that what had appeared to be a deep porch ran back for no more than six inches. But I flattened myself against the wall—if a man who weighed eighteen stone can be said to flatten himself—and hoped for the best. Suddenly I felt something soft against my legs and looking down I saw a tabby cat which purred when I picked it up. And then a dog ran into the same shelter, too scared even to get excited about the cat. I carried the cat for a little after I left the doorway and the dog trotted at my heels, anxious for a friend; but I didn't see how I could keep them, so when we came to a butcher's shop I

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opened the door and let them both run in—surely no two animals ever enjoyed such a boundless feast.

Just outside the town, life completely swept down on me again. Here Belgian soldiers were throwing up hasty defences and cutting loopholes in cottage walls in readiness for a rearguard stand. Others were digging trenches, and now and again stopping to gnaw at unearthed turnips with every sign of ravenous hunger. I had left my car close to this clump of houses and now I was in a hurry to get into it and drive off: but a Belgian officer, who spoke very good English, asked me to lend it for bringing up ammunition. I agreed—and by so doing very nearly became involved in my first military action.

A report came in that the Germans were already through the town. The Belgian soldiers at once jumped to their loopholes while I, as a civilian, stood looking rather helplessly around, wondering what my position would be if a skirmish developed. But before I could make up my mind what to do someone pressed a rifle on me, said: "You English? You shoot?" and pointed to a loophole in the corner of the building.

That seemed to me to decide the question. I didn't really bother any more about what would

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happen if I was caught in a civilian jacket with that rifle in my hands, and I knelt on the cottage floor, squinting along the rifle sights and getting an idea of ranges on likely spots. Then there was an uncomfortably tense interval, with no sign of any Germans. All, in fact, was very quiet, but I was struck by the sight of a civilian, making his way with great caution, not out of the town but towards it. He darted about in little short runs, like a man trying to keep under cover—but the odd thing was that what cover there was was always behind him and never between him and where the Germans were supposed to be. It was as if he didn't want to be seen—didn't want *us* to see him—and I grew so suspicious that if I had been more sure of my powers as a linguist I should have drawn attention to him.

Finally, I went outside just as a senior officer rode up. This man could talk English and I was just going to tell him of my suspected spy when I saw another civilian, this time mounted on a bicycle, trying to slip, in the same undemonstrative manner, past the side of the house. I said: "That is the second man who has gone back into the town in the last few minutes," and I told my story.

It was too late then to apprehend the first man

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but the second was stopped: and I heard afterwards that he faced a firing party. The first apparently got through to the Germans and gave away our dispositions, for within a few minutes shells began to fall all round us with remarkable accuracy, so that we had to beat a hasty retreat. I don't suppose that retirement made any real difference to the outcome of the War; and I was certainly glad of it for it enabled me to put down that damning rifle. My time for fighting came a little later and lasted for four years: soldiering has its points, but fighting as a *franc-tireur* seemed a different matter altogether.

CHAPTER NINE

REFUGEES

DURING these months I had not been present at any serious military action although I had photographed war scenes innumerable. I had a pass which enabled me to go wherever I liked and several times Belgian officers had come to warn me that there was nothing ahead of me except the Germans. But most of my pictures had been of bursting shells and the throwing up of fortifications, together with scenes of pathos such as the exodus of refugees, the silent streets, and Cardinal Mercier weeping over his stricken cathedral at Malines.

In those first days of the War, such pictures seemed sensational enough, and my friends at home assured me that the theatres which were showing my films were continually crowded from stalls to gallery. Yet I always wanted to do more than that. I wanted pictures of a big modern battle.

My chance seemed to have come when the Germans swept forward towards Antwerp and it

became clear that the Belgians, with our reinforcements, would attempt to stand there and save their city. Moreover, the presence of the British troops would put this section of the war into the forefront of British interest, so that this was clearly where I could be most usefully employed.

Getting into Antwerp was easy: indeed, I went in and out of the city several times during a fortnight. But I knew that if things went wrong to leave it finally might be another matter. But I didn't seriously bother about that. I rather thought that—being master of my own movements and able to choose my own moment for escape—I should probably be able to make my way into Holland. But that could wait till the eventuality arose. The great thing was to get into Antwerp and to contrive to be present with my camera at a modern big-scale battle.

So one day I took my car down the road from Ghent to Antwerp. Soon we overtook a long column of troops, accompanied by many armoured cars. They were our own men—the Royal Naval Division, sturdy fellows, keen for a fight, well equipped (certainly *I* saw no sign of strappings replaced by bits of string) and in the pink of condition. I contrived to leave my car and get a ride (together with some excellent pic-

tures) on one of the armoured cars, just behind Colonel Wedgwood. And so, in the long convoy of my own countrymen, marching, as they thought, to the relief of Belgium, I crossed the bridge of boats over the Scheldt and entered Antwerp.

I went forward that same afternoon towards the firing-line, following our own fellows as they went hastily into action. My pass let me through and I had no difficulty in getting the photographs I wanted. But the guns were firing a bombardment and it soon became clear that further south very heavy firing was in progress. I tried to get news but no one seemed much clearer than I was as to exactly what was happening. Then I tried my luck with staff officers, but they were short with me, being apparently far too much pre-occupied to consider my questions.

As the hours passed, however, I began to appreciate their pre-occupation. In a battle, news very quickly trickles into the back areas, telling the progress of the fight. It comes first with the wounded who are usually cheerful in their pain if their particular attack has succeeded, but silent if it has failed. On that day it became apparent that things were going ill. Little groups of weary "walking wounded" limped past me, and when I

asked for news they just shook their heads and limped on without an answer. Ambulances hurried by and the drivers' faces were set. Lorries were driven furiously down the road, back towards Antwerp or on towards the firing-line, and no one would stop to chat or sing out glad news in passing. An air of depression settled everywhere and it became certain that the day was lost.

The enemy shelling, too, increased and many bursts of shrapnel came near—too near—the road on which I waited. A little Cockney wagon-driver was waiting there too. What he was waiting for I don't know, and I rather suspect that he didn't know either. But that didn't matter to him. After a while I suggested that as the shelling was coming uncomfortably close we might do well to move. He answered: "Well, my orders is to wait here, and here I wait if the whole blinking German army comes." Fine discipline; but happily for myself I was not under orders. Besides, I had had my fill of photographing bursting shells and I wanted fresh subjects for my camera. So I moved off.

A little further down the road, in the middle of a bridge, I came upon a black soldier and addressed him in Swahili. His eyes stared and his mouth opened at that, for I don't suppose he had heard his own tongue for months. Then his face



AT THE HEAD OF MY COMPANY.



THE ADVANCE ON BUKOBA.

EXODUS FROM ANTWERP.



lit up with joy. He was waiting, too, and probably he knew no more why he was waiting than the Cockney had done, but he seemed very anxious that I should wait with him and converse with him in Swahili. He came from the Congo and knew Irimu, where I had been a few months previously. "Irimu very good," he said, "Belgium very bad." And as at that moment a shrapnel shell burst a few yards from us, just at the side of the road, I was definitely inclined to agree with him.

After that there seemed nothing for it but to go back to the city. And as things turned out that was my furthest advance from Antwerp towards the enemy. After that it was the enemy who advanced towards me.

There were several war correspondents in the city—Robinson of the *Times*, Fox of the *Morning Post*, Percival Phillips of the *Daily Mail*, Cleary of the *Daily Express* and many others. The representative of the *Evening News* was an Australian lady—I am sorry that I forget her name—whose pluck under shell-fire won my admiration. A month earlier she had disguised herself as a Belgian peasant and had managed to make her way into Brussels where she secured an interview with Burgomaster Max. And I think she was the

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last of the correspondents to leave Antwerp, for she stood in the crowd watching the German cavalry ride in.

Naturally enough the English Press representatives made a point of dining together whenever they could and of comparing notes. That evening, while several of us were at dinner, there was much discussion as to whether—and if so, when—the Germans would shell the city. The general opinion was that they would attack the forts but spare the city, but I, having seen Termonde and been very near to Louvain, was certain that Antwerp would come in for its share of destruction; and indeed, in view of what I had seen and heard on the road that day, I offered a bet that the shelling would start that very night, not later than midnight. Actually, it was at midnight exactly that the first shell, aimed at some oil-tanks and the bridge of boats, passed over the cathedral and burst near the river.

At that moment I was standing with the *Daily Mail* photographer outside my hotel, which faced the Square. I decided to walk across to the English Hotel on the other side of the cathedral and discuss matters with Cleary of the *Express*, who was staying there. Ten minutes before, that hotel must have presented the normal appearance

of any hotel at midnight: a few "late-nighters" would have been seated round the bar, others would have been in easy-chairs in the lounge discussing the affairs of the day, some people would have been in bed, many must have been in the act of undressing. But then that first shell had burst not far from the bridge of boats, dispelling all convictions that the city would remain unharmed, and immediately panic reigned. I met people rushing from their houses, half dressed: down the staircase of the hotel came a stream of people in their night clothes, some carrying strange assortments of clothes in their hands, others clutching jewel cases. The manager was darting about, stirring the scared servants into activity, assuring everyone that there was nothing to be frightened of, endeavouring to dissuade those who wanted to run out into the street and every minute dashing across the hall to show distracted people the way down the basement stairs to the cellars.

I found a young girl in the office, apparently torn between her terror of the shell and her sense of duty, which prevented her leaving. I tried to make her listen to me and at last got her to attend sufficiently to grasp that I wanted to know where Cleary could be found. Yes, she said, he was upstairs, in his room: at least he had

been before this terrible thing happened. But now, who knew? Perhaps he was dead. People said that many hundreds had been killed. The city was in flames. In another minute the Uhlans would come, with their lances. They would kill everyone, everyone.

And so on. I stopped her at last. I pointed out that only one shell had fallen and that I had seen it burst across the river, harming no one. There was nothing, I said, to be frightened about. But I didn't feel sure of that.

I climbed the stairs, meeting many people coming down. As I passed along the corridors, searching for Cleary's room, I looked in at many open doorways and saw everything in disorder: clothes strewn on the floor, chairs overturned, trunks hastily ransacked for valued possessions, jewellery dropped on the floor and overlooked.

At last I found Cleary, in a small room at the back of the hotel, quietly going over a proof-slip with the editor of an Antwerp paper. It was a wonderful example of the advantage of concentrating on one's work. They hadn't even heard the bursting of the shell or the panic on the stairs. Indeed, when I told them the news they didn't believe it and when at last I persuaded them to come and see for themselves, and from the hall

they heard the bursting of other shells, Cleary still persisted that the noise came from the firing of British guns.

I suggested that we should go to my hotel and hear what the other correspondents had to say. Before we had walked thirty yards, we heard the scream of a shell and saw it explode some distance down the road.

On the cathedral tower, the "Peace Flag" presented by Carnegie was still flying in mute protest. In the cathedral itself, men were busy taking down valuable pictures and packing them for removal to safety. Across the Square came a crowd of refugees, dragging behind them great bundles of their possessions wrapped in blankets —there had been no time to pack—or pushing carts, wheelbarrows, bicycles, all laden high.

We reached my hotel and found it already deserted. The photographer from the *Daily Mail* was there—no doubt he was wishing as I did, that this scene could have happened in daylight when we could have used our cameras—and he and Cleary and I, finding that we could do nothing and having no desire as yet to join the swarm of refugees, stood in the porch of the hotel discussing the events of the day. Suddenly two British officers, who for some time had been walking to

and from past us, came up on either side and one of them seized hold of Cleary. When I tried to intervene, one of the officers said: "This man is a spy. I don't know about you, but you were with him so I arrest you as well." I told him not to make a fool of himself and suggested that he would do well to send for a staff officer. It was some minutes before one arrived, but I am thankful to say that when he did come he turned out to be a sensible fellow who admitted that our papers were entirely in order.

Cleary then went off to try to hunt for "copy," but the other photographer and myself, being essentially daylight workers, did what we could to get some sleep on the floor of the porter's office, with our cameras for pillows. We did not sleep soundly. Again and again we were awakened by the crashing of shells, one of which actually hit the hotel. But if we didn't get much rest we at least passed the time till morning came—and with it the blessed daylight for our pictures.

But if we had rested it seemed that no one else had. Still the streams of refugees crossed the Square. Down every side street they came, leaving bare only one great island of paving near the side where several shells had recently fallen and turned the smooth pavé into a chaos of upturned stone and

ominous-looking holes. The refugees thought—and they had only too good reason to think it—that this great square with the cathedral tower above it was a point of special danger; and in little knots they hurried across, too scared to stop if a bundle of their possessions tumbled off a cart, and shouting to each other to hurry whenever the stream threatened to become blocked by the slow progress of an ancient couple.

For some time I stood taking cinematograph pictures of this heartrending scene, and then—I suppose because of my special interest in animals—it occurred to me to go and see what was happening in the zoo: if shelling put Man into such a state of panic, how would it affect wild creatures in their cages? I went—and found scenes that to me were almost more terrible. The zoo was alongside the railway-station, and as that would naturally become a target for enemy fire it was thought that shells would fall also on the animals' cages, breaking them and setting loose panic-stricken animals to add to the horror in the city. Consequently, all the dangerous animals were being shot. Lions, tigers, leopards who had endured close captivity for years now ended their lives from bullets at close quarters. Keepers who had learned to love them came hesitatingly

forward, gun in hand . . . it was a horrible sight and one that I could not bear to watch.

So back I went to the even more terrible scenes of anguish in the streets. I went down to the bridge of boats across the Scheldt and found it hopelessly blocked with the swarm of refugees, a great crowd of whom was now gathered on the bank, fighting with one another to get nearer to the head of the bridge, women fainting in the crush, families becoming separated, children losing their parents, handcarts being overturned and perforce abandoned.

This sight convinced me that it would be madness to stay longer in the city. I had taken a thousand feet of film during the last twenty-four hours, and there was little more that I could do. By the next night, I felt sure, the Germans would be in possession.

I sent off my assistant early by car with the film, telling him to try to get away through St. Nicholas. I learnt afterwards that he had a narrow escape. Some German soldiers who had reached the road called on him to stop and when he accelerated by way of answer they opened fire on him. One bullet wounded an already wounded Belgian soldier to whom my assistant was giving a lift, and another smashed the lens of one of my

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cameras. But the car got through and the precious film was undamaged. Indeed, it was exhibited in London forty-eight hours later.

For my own part I lingered a little longer, taking photographs, and then in the late afternoon I made my way to the Scheldt. The rush there to get on to a steamboat was so great that many people fell between the side of the boat and the quay and were drowned. But many hundreds scrambled aboard, badly overloading the ship; and at last we pushed off. There were the same wild scenes at the Dutch frontier, where we had to transfer to the railway—indeed, I travelled to Flushing on the footboard, hanging on precariously with one hand on the frame of a window.

CHAPTER TEN

SNIPERS AND INSECTS

THREE is a standing jibe against the pundits of the War Office, that if a man was a specialist in sanitary science they used him in the Remount Department, and if he knew all about horses he became a private in a sanitary squad. There was certainly one unit, however, in which experts were employed in their proper place, and that was the 25th Battalion Royal Fusiliers, in the campaign in German East Africa.

But the credit for that belongs less to the War Office than to Colonel Daniel Patrick Driscoll.

He had served through the Burma Campaign of 1886-88 and in the South African War, 1900-02, where he won the D.S.O. He was a born soldier and leader of men, of great personal courage and an iron resolution. An instance of this is that early in the War he had a conversation with Lord Kitchener in which the Secretary of State for War expressed the opinion that a man holding an important command should be exceptionally sparing in the use of alcohol. Driscoll

forthwith decided to become a total abstainer "for the duration" and (except for one accident which I shall relate) he kept firmly to that resolve; and at the same time he decided to give up smoking, although his pipe had been his constant friend.

As soon as war broke out he sought permission to raise a special battalion out of the Legion of Frontiersmen for service in German East Africa. In September 1914, the War Office, with its customary antipathy to the irregular soldier, formally declined the offer. Three months later the officials sent for him, put to him the exact proposal which they had previously declined, and asked how soon he could get together a thousand men. He undertook to have a battalion ready for service by the end of January and was told to get ahead. Within a fortnight he received a War Office letter cancelling those instructions and at the end of January a further letter asking if the battalion could be ready to sail by February 10th. And finally, it landed in Mombasa on May 4th, 1915.

Driscoll knew the job that was in front of him and its difficulties, and he wanted at least a sprinkling of experts. He chose F. C. Selous and myself as his Intelligence Officers and insisted on Selous' appointment being made when the War

Office objected to the employment of an officer who was then sixty-four: but Selous had been in Africa as a hunter more or less continuously since 1871, and Driscoll knew that a more competent man for intelligence work could not possibly be found. He also got commissions for George Outram, an Australian who had come to South Africa for the Boer War, and had been a hunter in East Africa ever since, and for a man named Reid (usually called "Baby Reid") who knew nothing about Africa but everything about guerilla fighting, as the result of having been a general in one of the South American Revolutions.

I was never a parade-ground soldier. I once achieved the distinction of being reprimanded by a General at an inspection for addressing the rear-rank of my command as "back rank," and the intricacies of "right form" and "left form" would confuse me to this day. On the other hand I knew the country we were going to fight in and was a dead shot both with a rifle and with a revolver, and something of an expert in rapid firing. And I knew all there was to know about advancing under observation in open country, while not even the most timid staff officer was quicker than I at taking cover when snipers opened fire.

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Some of our officers, however, had not that claim to expert knowledge and in the usual army method, when it came to training, the sheep were herded with the goats. On the boat going out, Selous, Outram, and I all found ourselves on the upper deck receiving instruction in how to load and aim a rifle. To the sergeant in charge of us, this training of elderly new officers was doubtless very boring, but it was much more boring for us and the only man who derived any amusement from it was Lord Louis Mountbatten (as he afterwards became), who was much amused and took a photograph of us as we lay on the deck looking like anything but big-game hunters. But after a while Outram's patience became exhausted and he turned to me with the remark: "Don't you think this is damned silly, Cherry?" to which I agreed just as the adjutant came up behind us. The sequel was a special lecture for all officers on discipline. The cap fitted, and Outram and I wore it.

Soon after landing, we concentrated at Kajaido, half-way between the Uganda Railway and the Magadi Soda Lake in the game reserve. I do not know who selected the site for our camp, but it must have been some staff officer who was used to the amenities of Salisbury Plain. He found a most

suitable-looking piece of ground—so suitable that it had recently been used by Indian troops and before that by the natives who built the railway—but he didn't know that in Africa a camping-ground that has once been used must on no account be used again, or it will become the scene of a bad outbreak of dysentery. That camping-ground began our casualty list.

While we were at Kajaido, a thick mist settled over us one night and the Officer of the Rounds asked me to accompany him because he was new to the country and he seemed to think that walking about an unknown continent in a thick mist at night would be less perilous if he had an experienced guide. We visited a trench a few hundred yards away and then blundered on for half a mile, very uncertain as to where we were. Suddenly a sentry challenged us and I heard the click of a rifle bolt as a cartridge was slid into the chamber. My friend explained that he was the Orderly Officer, but the only reply was: "That doesn't matter a damn. My orders are to shoot anyone who comes near this trench." So we had to leave it at that and return to the mist.

That was the worst of "temporary" soldiers: some of them took their duties so very seriously. It was usually different with the Regulars, and of

that we had an example the same evening. After we had walked on for a long time we were challenged again, this time by a sentry in the Indian section of the camp. A piping voice rang out: “ ‘Alt, who dogo dere?’” Mindful of the previous experience, I quickly replied: “Friend.” “Well,” called the sentry, “De plas word, flend?” I said: “I have forgotten. What is it?” He replied: “Kisumu.” I repeated: “Kisumu,” and he said: “Plas flend, all’s well.” Which was very satisfactory.

My intimate connection with natural history began very soon in this campaign. My bed disappeared in the mysterious way in which possessions do “disappear” in the army, and I was compelled to sleep on the ground. In the morning I shook my sleeping-bag, and out fell a scorpion, a centipede and a hairy caterpillar, none of them of the type which a wise man chooses for bedfellows. But oddly enough not one of them had disturbed me . . . possibly they knew that I was an animal lover!

The men soon decided that insects—of a more poisonous kind than those common on the Western Front—took a leading place among the “horrors of war”: one man in particular, at that camp, had much to say on the subject for as he lay on his

back talking, in a big tent, a small scorpion dropped from the roof right into his mouth. Fortunately he spat it out before harm was done, but it was the beginning of some firm opinions that Africa was no place for decent British troops.

Men in the ranks who had had no experience of Africa and no great learning on the subject of natural history, soon acquired a pithy collection of hair-raising tales to send home. There was the man who went scouting on his hands and knees and came face to face with a cobra: the snake lay with raised head so that for several seconds the two stared unblinkingly at one another and then the snake sank down and crawled away in the grass. And later there was the sudden alarm at an outpost when a soldier cried out: "Look out, they're rushing us!" and a whole company opened rapid fire—which killed quite a number of a troop of baboons.

I did my best to carry on my studies of natural history throughout the campaign. For one thing, I started a collection of beetles, while Selous (whose real speciality was elephants) interested himself in butterflies. But even that normally harmless occupation was fraught with danger. Once I found three very beautiful beetles, and had just given one to Selous when a sniper's bullet



GIRAFFE—A STUDY IN PATTERN.



CHEETAHS IN AMBUSH.

zipped between our heads—which were very close as we bent over to examine the insects.

Anyone who has had experience of the War on the Western Front—with its creeping barrages, pill-boxes and tanks—will think our campaign in East Africa a very tame affair: he will probably call it a “holiday side-show” and wish that he could have had the luck to be sent there instead of into the maelstrom of the Somme. It is a fact that things were very different with us: indeed, we felt ourselves ill-used at the Battle of Bukoba because while we had to rely on the support of mountain-guns and ships’ guns, the enemy had one real piece of land artillery. It is also a fact that in that action, which lasted for two days, the total British casualties amounted to thirty-seven.

On the other hand we had difficulties to contend with which were never met in Europe. We were fighting “open warfare” with a far-flung battle-line. We had no continuous line of trenches and we never knew what unprotected piece of railway or exposed outpost would next be attacked in a sudden raid. We frequently marched without water and were often short also of rations. There was a lack of proper and adequate medical supplies and the danger of sudden and devastating outbreaks of fever and dysentery was always with

us. We seldom marched on a road and when we attacked it was usually up the exhausting face of a hill. The enemy was seldom in any fixed spot and when we marched in small parties through jungle of the kind that is usually called "impenetrable," it was with the knowledge that a stronger party of the enemy might, for all we knew, be crossing the same stretch of jungle at the same time, and might find and annihilate us before we found them. There were dangers from living creatures which could not be avoided with Lysol and chloride of lime: apart from the possibility that a scout might run straight into the jaws of a lion, there were numerous insects whose bites were deadly poisonous. And, more trying than anything else, the country was admirably suited for snipers and the native soldiers employed by the enemy were well trained in that section of the art of war.

Looking back now over the intervening years, I find that snipers and insects are two of the things which most stand out in my memory. I was frequently being bitten by ticks—indeed, I was once attacked by a hitherto unknown species. We were on a scouting expedition near the German border, short of water and with none of the comforts of civilized campaigning. Selous, Outram, and I lay down under an overhanging rock one

night, on the bare ground and covered only with a thin rug. About an hour after getting to sleep I awoke feeling as if a safari of ants was crawling over my body. We were too near the enemy for a match to be struck and except for ascertaining that at least there was no safari of ants, there was nothing I could do but grin and bear the awful sensation. Eventually, I fell asleep from sheer exhaustion, and awoke to find it daylight and to hear Selous saying: "Why, Cherry, you've turned black!"

That was a slight exaggeration, but I had nineteen bites on my face, neck, arms and body, all from spirilum ticks, five of which I caught.

The spirilum tick is a redoubtable insect. These five were like miniature tortoises. I kept them in a match-box and eventually they reached Cambridge where, as I have said, they were found to be of an unknown species—there was a proposal that it should be named after me, but I declined the honour feeling that after all a tick was not very much to be remembered by.

Neither Selous nor Outram had had any experience of these ticks, but I had seen one case before, when Jim Barnes got a single bite during our trip across Africa. At first each bite is surrounded by a ring of many colours, which

gradually spreads, while the area of the bite itself swells and begins to bleed, sometimes very considerably. During the first three days a surface poisoning spreads in a circle twelve or fourteen inches across around each bite, the skin adopting all sorts of dark colours and giving a general appearance of blackness. All this happened in my case, so that soon Selous' exclamation that I had turned black was pretty well justified. One bite in particular bled so badly that I had a trickle of blood under my clothing, starting on the side of my neck and coming out at my knees. A young soldier who had been a medical student at Edinburgh University volunteered to stop the bleeding and did so all too effectively with a piece of cork and a bandage. But that stopped the circulation, with the result that after walking twenty yards I dropped to my knees on the point of collapse.

I never knew by what piece of luck I escaped the normal outcome of such an attack, which is known as spirillum fever—a dire complaint lasting thirty days and subject to no known remedy, with the final almost invariable outcome of blindness in one eye.

But I did escape that—perhaps the strenuousness of the days, which compelled me to keep moving, had something to do with it. We were sixty

strong and we knew that there was a German force of three hundred men very close to us—but just where it was, we did not know. We had no rations except bully beef and biscuits and, as I have said, we were desperately short of water. We were compelled to march all through the heat of that first day, slipping away from the enemy and also hoping to locate a watercourse. We didn't find a watercourse—and if we had done it would probably have been practically dry—but we did find water, by what seemed rather like a miracle. The sky was absolutely clear and no one had any thought of rain. But just as we reached a flat out-crop of rock about a hundred yards long, a small cloud suddenly appeared from nowhere in the sky, thunder crashed and for twenty minutes rain fell in torrents.

It rained so terrifically that uneven parts of the rock became covered with water a foot deep. Everyone stripped to the skin and enjoyed the shower-bath, while everything that could possibly hold water was spread out to replenish our supplies. Then the cloud vanished almost as suddenly as it had come, and we were left to continue our march through the terrific heat.

Possibly it will one day be discovered that a rain-water bath is the sovereign cure for spirillum

fever. Though certainly it had no immediate effect on the bites themselves and the surrounding poison which continued to spread over my body during the remaining three days' march. When we at last reached camp, I was hurried down to Voy and then up to Nairobi, the various doctors who inspected me *en route* all admitting that they had never seen such a case as mine, in which the symptoms were exceptionally severe and the after-effects remarkably light.

I was equally fortunate in escaping from that other pest, the sniper. East Africa provides him with perfect cover—thick bush, little kopjes and numerous boulders. Perhaps it was my habit of using my knowledge of stalking that made various snipers extremely keen to get me. When one is sniping, one takes a pride in one's craft; sitting shots at men who fully expose themselves do not give much satisfaction, but to hit a man who knows how to take advantage of every bit of cover is a triumph.

At any rate I certainly seemed to be a favourite target. Indeed, most of my memories of the Battle of Bukoba are concerned with dodging snipers and with doing a bit in that line myself.

I was “galloper on foot” to the Colonel and General Stewart and consequently saw more of

the battle than I should have done if I had been in charge of a platoon or company. For all that, of course, I knew little at the time of what was happening outside my own immediate neighbourhood. But I did soon discover that things had gone wrong—as was so often the case—at the start. It was to have been a surprise landing from ships which crossed the lake without lights, but we were greeted with an outbreak of Very lights from a little island just off the town. And when at daybreak we had landed and climbed a rocky hill and reached level ground within sight of the enemy, we found that active preparations had been made against us, the grass having been burned off the ground so that our khaki, bleached by the sun, showed up as a perfect mark against the blackened ground.

There was, of course, a cure for that and our men soon adopted it—they lay down and rolled on the newly-burnt grass until their uniforms were black: an example of the acquisition of protective colouring which greatly appealed to me as a naturalist.

On the whole we were lucky in getting across that bit of ground with only a few casualties. Then we traversed a banana plantation and came to the edge of a valley with a kopje in the middle

of it, and Bukoba three or four miles away on the shore of the lake. The further side of this valley was bounded by a big cliff, somewhere in the uneven surface of which were hidden three enemy machine-guns and a number of snipers.

While acting as "galloper on foot," I had orders to spend any spare time in trying to spot snipers, a task in which Outram joined me. I was coming back from delivering a message when machine-gun bullets began to hit the ground at my feet. I dropped at once into the long grass and used all my skill at stalking in trying to keep the blades of grass still, so as not to give away the course I was taking. Eventually, I got to cover behind two big rocks where I found Outram. A sniper put a bullet between us, hitting the rock and missing us by inches, and then we decided to do a little attack on our own and wipe out that sniper.

We advanced in the best big-game-hunter style, were missed twice by bullets and then came under erratic shell-fire from the town. The first shell dropped fifty yards ahead and the second only eight yards away. Outram was lucky and fell promptly into a hole and I took the only other available cover—a boulder about three feet square, which I went round like a lizard. The shell proved a dud—which was very lucky for me—but

before I had realized that, a bullet hit the rock within an inch of me and sent me bolting back to the other side again. Meanwhile Outram had spotted the snipers and put a couple of shots into their hiding-place: after which he looked up from his hole and shouted with laughter at my antics round the boulder—he swore that I must have an india-rubber neck to be able to turn my head so far round and so quickly as I had done when the shell came. (I wonder whether it was some such incident as this which led to the famous advertisement of another kind of “Shell”?)

I then added my fire to Outram’s and no more was heard from those particular snipers. The machine-guns were still troublesome, however, although every now and again we could see the gunners (presumably while their guns were cooling) come out on the top of the cliff and stand smoking and watching the fight. Eventually one of them was shot in this foolhardy act, and a little later our men worked round and put both guns out of action.

In the advance, as our fellows were clearing the valley, we had to wade through a swamp and a stream four feet deep, and immediately afterwards, while we were wet to the skin, a halt was called for the night. We lighted fires to dry our

clothes and make tea—for we had had no food all day—but immediately the enemy snipers got to work and all lights had to be put out. It was a miserable night, although “Baby Reid” and I did manage to dry a little of the damp out of our clothes and also out of the Colonel’s, and to brew a cup of tea for each of us.

It was then that the Colonel’s resolution for teetotalism was broken—though without any fault of his own. For Reid whispered to me as he passed me my cup: “I’ve put a little drop in yours,” and it was not until Driscoll had swallowed his at a gulp, and I had ascertained at the first sip of mine that it contained nothing but unadulterated tea that we realized, silent and aghast, that the cups had become mixed in the darkness.

By that time, as so often happens, the Colonel’s personal abstinence had developed into a rabid doctrine so that he was continually filled with anxiety lest the men in his charge should suffer from drunkenness. When at last, on the following day, Bukoba was captured and we had entered the town, his first orders to me were to go into every bungalow and smash every bottle of alcohol. It proved a long job, though pleasant, of course, to anyone who can enjoy an orgy of destruction. I wish now that I had kept a record of the number of

bottles that I broke. (As a matter of fact, I had a flask of my own in my pocket, but as my orders had specifically referred to "bottles found in bungalows" I decided that that was exempt.)

At the same time I took on a private commission of my own to prohibit looting, for I had seen enough wanton destruction done in Belgium to last me a lifetime. Here, in the second house I entered, I found an officer amusing himself by cutting piano-strings with a pair of wire-nippers and a little later I met a colonel (who certainly ought to have known better) proudly carrying off the door-plate of the Governor's house. It is one of our national hypocrisies to maintain that the British soldier never falls to the instinct for looting and that that crime is only committed by the people who happen at the moment to be our enemies. But these incidents and many others proved to me that in this respect we are no different from the generality of mankind: someone else's property becomes no one's property when the someone isn't there, and finding is keeping. And the delight in sheer wanton destruction which I found growing on me as I smashed bottle after bottle of costly wine, is mere human nature. I suppose the officer with the wire-nippers was the grown-up equivalent

of the boy who takes the watch to pieces and the younger child who pulls feathers out of the pillow. Yet though this instinct is more common in us than many people suppose, the lack of restraint which allows it is one of the minor evils of warfare. Sometimes it runs to a length which is utterly inexcusable—indeed, some of the most revolting incidents which I saw during the War occurred when the human instinct for destruction was directed against animals, presumably under the heading of “sport,” but really from a sheer lust for slaughter.

A question which constantly interested me was what happened to the larger animals of the forest while a battle was on. Certainly one rarely saw them, and I suppose the truth is that the noise of firing scared them so that for the time being they deserted their homes. But it was a different matter during the normal routine of open warfare, with marches and counter-marches and only occasional small outbreaks of firing. When Driscoll and I used to make a round of our outposts at dusk and at daybreak, we frequently saw herds of elephants and occasionally a rhino or a lion. At Bura, on the railway-line between Voy and Kilimanjaro, we had as an outpost a small roughly-built shelter, of stones, roofed with bush and guarded by three

or four men. One night a small herd of elephants came down and proceeded to investigate. Trampling through the barrier of thorns which we used round this shelter in place of barbed wire, one of the creatures came right up to the fort. The men within it had had more experience with cows and pigs and chickens than with elephants and instead of indulging in a little elephant-shooting with their rifles, they lay down on the bottom of the fort and hoped for the best. Soon the roof of bushes was smashed in and as they looked up in terror they saw the elephant's trunk slowly waving between them and the stars and then descending, searching every corner, until it came to within a foot of their bodies and blew into their faces.

At one moment during Bukoba, I thought that the unexpected had happened and that a terrified animal, separated from its herd, had strayed on to the battlefield. It was a movement of grass behind a big rock that attracted my attention, and I approached it cautiously because I was convinced that if this was not a wild animal it must be a sniper. But it was neither—it was a native girl. Where the rest of her tribe had gone, nor how she had become separated from them, I do not know. But she was alone and terrified. A certain amount of fire from the naval guns was

going on, and snipers were busy. Our khaki-clad men were advancing up the side of the hill and the rat-tat-tat of machine-guns came continuously. The girl—she might have been sixteen years old—was trembling like a leaf as she turned her wide gazelle-like eyes at me, and she clutched my arm as if begging me to stay and protect her. But though that branch of chivalry was allowed in the days of knighthood, there is no place for it in a modern battle; I had to get on and all I could do was to pat her head and tell her not to be afraid. She crouched down again behind the rock—which at the moment was much the best thing she could do—and fixed beseeching eyes on me as I turned away. I have often wondered since what became of her: whether some misdirected sniper's bullet struck her, or whether, the mother now of several brown piccaninnies, she squats to-day in the doorway of some native hut, telling over and over again the story of how she watched when the Bwanas fought.

Soon after Bukoba, a new kind of trench-mortar was invented by "Baby Reid" (who derived his nickname from the fact that he weighed twenty-two and half stone, whereas I, another "baby," weighed eighteen and half, and a third, Lieut. MacMillan, made the record with twenty-seven

stone). His invention was really a cross between a trench-mortar and a field-gun and it was designed to have a range of nearly three-quarters of a mile. It was given a trial near what is now the aerodrome outside Nairobi, in the presence of all the Generals and the H.Q. Staff, although I noticed that they carefully kept fifty yards between them and the gun: not that I criticize them for that, for I should have followed their example if I had not been about to take photographs of the experiment.

As it was, MacMillan and Reid and I stood close to the gun, and I got to work with my newly-invented spring cinematograph camera, while first a bag of black powder and then a canister of dynamite were rammed down the muzzle of the gun. Then the fuse was lighted—and the next event was that half the barrel of the gun flew, in a violent explosion, between MacMillan and myself. Apparently the experimental gun had been made by local labour instead of at Woolwich, and a little lump had been left on the inside of the barrel—or so the experts agreed, though there was not enough of the gun left for the point ever to be decided.

While we were at Bura, a post on the new line between the Uganda Railway and Kilimanjaro,

the R.N.A.S. put in an application that I should be loaned to them, as they were urgently in need of a photographer. I then did a good deal of work first for them and later for the R.F.C., and eventually I found myself in charge of an aerodrome in Tanganyka. I was proud of it as my first independent command, but I cannot pretend that—at any rate at first—it was in any way comparable to Croydon or Mildenhall. It lay in a small hollow and was about four hundred yards long. In places, the ground was fairly clear; but in others, stones and piles of rubbish littered the grass, so that any pilot who did not know exactly where to come down would have found landing particularly dangerous. My first job, therefore, was to get the ground clear. In addition to four or five mechanics, I had fifteen porters and a guard of half a dozen Cape boys. When I gave orders that the rubbish should be gathered into a big heap and burnt, all the porters went away and returned some time later armed with long sticks with which they began laboriously to scrape up the dead grass and rubbish. I became impatient. It was an easy job, and I took my coat off and set to work to show those lazy fellows just how easy it was if you gathered the stuff up with your hands and carried it to the fire in great armfuls.

But just as I reached the fire, a puff-adder put its head out of the heap I was carrying. It was within eight inches of my face and I lost no time in dropping it. Nor did I gather any more of that rubbish with my hands: I knew then why the porters had used sticks.

There were a great many lions in the neighbourhood of this aerodrome. My first news of them came from a motor-cyclist who came in one day at a terrific speed, with the report that two lions had paced him at a distance of forty yards from the roadway. A few mornings later some of my porters had an adventure. We drew our water from a hole which was so muddy that I had had to clear it by the use of alum. The men went to draw water from this hole and found four lions already in occupation of it. Precisely what happened before the porters came racing into camp crying: "Bwana! Minge Simba!" ("Master, lots of lions!") I never managed to ascertain, but I think the porters scared the lions and the lions scared the porters. In any case the men bolted with such blind terror that they tried to run through clumps of "wait-a-bit" thorn-bush which tore to rags their scanty clothing, so that when they reached the aerodrome they were all stark naked. And when I went down to investigate,

besides the footprints of the lions, I found the clothing of the porters, gaily decorating the bushes.

One day two aeroplanes, making for my aerodrome, missed their way and finally had to land some fifty miles away. I received orders to go and look for them, but as there was no known water supply anywhere near us and as we had no rations except tea, some very dirty sugar and a small supply of flour, the prospects of such an expedition, alone and on foot, were by no means pleasurable. I should, of course, have replenished my larder by shooting game, but even then it seemed a hopeless task to wander about the bush and plain looking for aeroplanes without the slightest knowledge of the direction they had taken. And to do that without water supplies was contrary to all the rules of safari. Nevertheless, it was obviously necessary to try to rescue the lost pilots and, however hopeless I felt, I should have had to set out if the news had not opportunely arrived that they had returned to camp.

What had happened to them was that after landing they had been deceived by the clearness of the air so that when, from the plain, they saw a camp in the distance on the side of a hill, they judged it to be only eight miles away, whereas

it was actually twenty-five. Not being used to the country and thinking they could easily walk that short distance, they took neither rifles nor water from the abandoned aeroplanes; then exhaustion overtook them and they were compelled to spend the night among the thorn-trees, making what shift they could to build a fire to keep off animals and suffering acutely from thirst. In the morning they started again, and suddenly came face to face with a lion. Hurriedly they climbed the nearest trees and in doing so one of them ran a big thorn into his knee which soon became so painful that before long he collapsed. There was then only one thing to be done. For the sound man to stay beside his wounded friend might have been heroic, but it would have meant the death of them both: he therefore pushed on alone in search of aid and by very good luck fell in with a party of natives who escorted him to the camp, whence a rescue party went out to save his companion.

My successor in command of this aerodrome found the constant presence of lions so little to his taste that he asked for an exchange within a week. But I didn't suffer in that way because I know just how far you can go with lions and how far you can't. Roaring in the night is very

alarming when you are not used to it; but like everything else it loses its terrors in time.

The road ran past my camp, so parties going forward would often stop by us at night for the sake of company. Some of these visitors used to be very bold at first and quite certain that to be attacked by lions would be "rather fun": but when the evening concert began they would come along rather shamefacedly and ask whether, after all, I would mind if they took advantage of my hospitality—by which of course they meant my protection. But once we were visited by two men of quite a different calibre. They were Dutch transport drivers, and I suppose they also had had experience of lions. At any rate, far from retreating when the "fun" began they put up a fight and shot two lions. And yet, on thinking it over I am less sure that lions had come into their previous experience, for they did a most foolish thing: they shot a buck in the evening and left its body lying under the wagon in which they slept—an attraction which the lions found irresistible. Perhaps it was not experience that made them shoot when the lions came nor even courage, but rather the desperation that came with the knowledge that it would be safer to stay and fight.

Once, during these days, I was in charge of a

convoy carrying aeroplane-bombs. Now, bombs have one thing in common with lions: they sound much more terrifying than—in their undetonated state—they are. Just before we started, I found that I had two large bombs more than the convoy could carry, so I put them down just outside a house where two or three officers were living in one of the comfortable interludes to campaigning. In the middle of dinner, just before our start, I sent a native boy to give these officers the information that only a thin wall separated them from a couple of live bombs. The officers' dinner was left unfinished!

Similarly, just after the start we overtook two Dutchmen who had lost their horses through tsetse fly. They asked for a lift and I let them clamber on to one of the wagons. After a while, one of them pointed to the boxes and said: "Food, eh?" "No," I said, "70-lb. bombs." And if the bombs had suddenly exploded, those two Dutchmen could hardly have got down sooner on to the road. After all, they informed me, they would prefer to walk.

I got a laugh over that, and perhaps it was as well, for it was the last I was to have for some time. That trek proved itself a serious business.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

INTERLUDE WITH LIONS

ONE night we came to the dried-up bed of a river, where a few drops of water had been collected in a canvas trough. This was the water-supply of the district: it wasn't much, but it was all there was and as it lay on an important military road it was sufficiently vital to our army's communications for a young officer to have been put in charge of it. One might have thought that although his was a lonely job it was at least an easy and safe one; but as a matter of fact it was far from that for although none of the enemy was near, this river-bed was a favourite resort of a large number of lions. They used to come down, he told me, every night, so that he lived in constant fear of them. And not only that, but they made things very dangerous for any passing convoy such as mine that stopped for water.

Though I am entirely against the shooting of wild animals as a general rule (except for the requirements of the pot), one is forced in time of war to do many things for the protection of one's

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comrades that one would not dream of doing in the ordinary way. It was absolutely necessary that this pool should be kept open and free for the use of the troops and supply convoys, and the presence of those lions was likely to put in jeopardy the army facing the enemy and in need of those supplies and reinforcements; besides which the animals were a constant danger to the convoys of wounded. I therefore felt it my duty to do something towards rendering that water-supply safe. Accordingly I built a rough platform in a Baobab-tree, about ten feet from the ground, and about fourteen yards away I placed the body of one of our bullocks that had died. Then I made a sort of rough barrier of thorn half-way between the bullock and the tree, and a doctor, who was with me, and I, climbed on to the platform and lay down.

The officer in charge of the pool had told me a harrowing story about the immense number of lions, but of course I had allowed for "normal exaggeration" and decided in my own mind that there would be just a couple of lions, with perhaps one or two cubs. I had something of a shock, therefore, about half an hour after midnight, when I began to see eyes in the darkness on all sides of the tree and became convinced that the number of

lions surrounding us could not possibly be less than sixteen!

At first from the pattering of feet I came to the conclusion that the youngsters among the troop were playing in the dry river-bed. Suddenly there came a strange cat-like noise, followed by complete silence. Then I saw a lioness move at one side, and I knew that she had smelt the bullock and was stalking it. A moment later there was a sudden rush and a bound and a terrific growl as she landed on the kill; and after that there was a wilder rush and a seething, snarling, growling mass of lions on the top of the dead bullock.

The sight made my flesh creep. I whispered to the doctor, who was new to this game: "What do you think of that?" and he whispered back, "I think we'd better not let them know we're here!" That was all very well and a very natural point of view, but it was clear to me that the freeing of that water supply was even more necessary than I had previously imagined.

So we hurriedly arranged that I should count three and that then we should fire together. Oddly enough, we both missed. I don't think the doctor was much of a shot at night—his eyes hadn't had the training mine had received in

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photographic dark-rooms. Why I missed I don't know. But at the sound of our rifles the lions leapt off the bullock and most of them retreated until we could only vaguely see them. One remained, however, and this time I took very careful aim. As I fired he gave a horrible growl and leapt straight at the tree. I thought he would get us, but instead he simply disappeared into the darkness. And then to my utter amazement all the other lions returned to the carcase and quietly began feeding again.

One of the odd things about lions is that you never know what they will do. They are individualistic and never keep to rules—or to be more exact, though there are certain things which you may expect a lion to do in given circumstances, you can never be certain that he will do them. Normally, in such a case as this, one would expect the lions to disappear into the depth of the bush and give the spot a very wide berth in the future. Whereas these lions hardly moved away when they were fired on and returned within a couple of minutes, quite serenely and apparently without any lingering suspicion of danger.

I could still hear one lion, presumably the one which had charged us, at the foot of the tree; and when we fired three more rounds another came

growling towards us and then disappeared in silence under our feet.

It was an extremely unpleasant predicament. Apparently two lions were immediately beneath us, another was still standing by the kill, three or four more were just a few yards further away, and how many more there might be we could not tell. Nor did we know how many we had killed. I felt certain that by now I had accounted for four, although the doctor declared that we had not got any at all. With a foolish idea of helping him I flashed an electric torch on the lion that still stood by the dead bullock and with this aid he fired a sufficiently close shot to wound though not to kill. Instantly, the great beast charged at the light—and I have no doubt we should both have been pulled from the tree if the lion's leap had not taken it into the heart of the fence of thorns, which I had wisely erected before the night's adventure started.

After we had each fired a few more shots, we realized another danger, as if enough were not already facing us. As I have said, when we started out we had expected an easy affair with just a couple of lions: and consequently we had not provided ourselves with anything like enough ammunition for the pitched battle which was

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taking place. Now, taking stock with belated prudence, we found that we had only three cartridges left between the two of us. One of these the doctor fired at a lioness, wounding her, and then we decided to take no more risks but to wait for daylight.

We sat on our platform in the tree, smoking our pipes since there was now nothing to be gained by secrecy, while the increasing light gradually showed us the forms of lions on every side. We did not know at first whether they were alive or dead, but finally, it became clear that the two which we had heard at the foot of the tree were both dead, as were three others. The rest, including the wounded lioness, made off and at last we were able to descend.

Then two mechanics brought us some tea and we asked them for what we needed far more—some fresh ammunition. They produced two very dirty-looking cartridges and with this reinforcement, which with what we had would allow us two shots each, we set off in pursuit of the wounded lioness. We had not gone far when we came to some patches of burnt grass; and then suddenly I saw the lioness crouching fifty yards away.

That is quite as close as any sensible man would want to be to a wounded and angry lion. Even

with plenty of ammunition there would be a risk, for if the first shot did not kill, the animal would immediately charge and a lion comes on at such a speed that, if one was any closer, there would be very little time to get in a second shot. My idea, therefore, was to open fire at once from where we stood. But the doctor's blood was up by then and he wanted to be in at the death: he was determined to go closer to get a fatal shot and no advice of mine would deter him. He started a careful circling movement that would bring him gradually nearer the lioness, while I very unwillingly felt compelled to follow as I was anxious for his safety. The two mechanics, who had accompanied us, very sensibly climbed up a thorn-tree. When the doctor was within thirty yards, he fired. In a second the lioness sprang to her feet and charged.

Having now only one cartridge left, the doctor showed belated wisdom and ran for his life; and at the same moment I fired, in time to distract the beast's attention and make her stand, looking first at the fleeing doctor and then at me. Very hurriedly I drew back the bolt to slide the last cartridge—the one which the mechanic had taken from his pocket—into the breech. And, to my consternation, it jammed.

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For seconds I wrestled with it, splitting my thumb-nail in frantic efforts to release it. The lioness was now less than twenty yards away and I knew that if she charged I should have no hope of escaping: all I could do was to club my rifle and fight it out, practically without hope unless the doctor could come to my rescue—and that depended on his last cartridge being better than mine and on his changing at this critical moment into a first-class shot.

With my eyes on the lion I stepped backwards for several yards, in the faint hope that I should get a few minutes' grace before the charge. Then—horror heaping on horror!—I felt sharp claws clutching me at the back of the neck, and in what was probably the worst second of my life I was sure I had blundered on another wounded lion, which in that instant had sprung to kill me.

So vivid was the certainty of this that I actually *felt* the weight of the beast's body on my shoulders and I sprawled forward under it, flat on my face. But the growl that should have followed did not come. Nor did I feel the shifting claws tearing the flesh from my back. Nor any longer was I conscious of the weight of the lion on my body.

I looked round. Nothing was there. There had been no lion behind me—nor anything but a

thorn-tree into the sharpness of which I had stepped backwards, so that it had scratched my neck.

To-day, I can laugh at that fright and at the state of nerves which had led to my self-deception. But then I did not laugh, for if there was no lion behind me there was still one in front, and she was wounded and angry and about to charge. She was crouching, with her head on her paws. The doctor was coming up, his rifle ready with our one usable cartridge in it. And then I realized that for some minutes the lioness had not stirred. Very cautiously I moved forward, with the doctor beside me. Still the lioness did not move. For one second we thought we saw her body move with breathing and we leapt back.

But there was no need for our alarm. The lioness was dead.

CHAPTER TWELVE

TREKKING

ON that trek with the convoy of bombs, we very soon ran into country that was infested with the tsetse fly and our bullocks began to die at an alarming rate. For the most part we travelled at night, but the length of each day's journey was largely governed by the whereabouts of water: when we reached a pool in the early hours of the morning and knew that there would be no more water within eight hours' march, there was nothing for it but to rest through the heat of the day and then push on as fast as we could to the next supply. We were short of food, too, and often went hungry unless we had the luck to shoot a gazelle.

Frequently we were beset by lions and had to build fires round the camp because otherwise the bullocks would stand on the alarm for hours at a time and get no rest. Once when we broke camp the doctor, who was a very heavy sleeper, lagged behind so that the convoy got quite a mile ahead of him. Then suddenly he came running after us,

completely out of breath and much alarmed as he stopped beside me and panted out his story. It appeared that he had been just about to mount his horse when the quietness of the night was broken by a lion's terrific roar. The horse immediately jerked the bridle out of the doctor's hand and bolted down the road in the way by which we had come: while the doctor, finding himself quite alone in face of this danger, ran at full speed after the convoy and did not stop till at last he overtook it. Apparently, the lion had chosen to pursue the horse rather than the man—which may have been lucky for the doctor.

An hour later, as we tramped along in the wake of the convoy, we were surprised to see two men up a tree by the side of the road. They told us they had been walking along the road after working on the telegraph wires, when lions appeared and drove them to that position of safety. I had heard nothing as we came along, but just as the men finished their story a great roaring started and from the changing direction of the sound we could tell that several lions were walking round and round us in a circle through the bush. I do not think they were more than forty yards away. It seemed out of the question to go on and leave the two scared telegraphists to their

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fate—for although most lions are not man-eaters, it is quite impossible to tell the nature of a lion from the sound of its roar—so I ordered the convoy to halt and lit a big fire by the side of the road.

This may have prevented the lions from coming nearer but it did not drive them away. We then fired a few shots at random into the darkness of the night, and for five minutes all was quiet. Then the roaring began again.

I could not keep the convoy stationary till daylight, for there was no water within many miles and that was no place to camp. So I told the two telegraphists to come with us for a time; we lit every light we could muster, hanging lanterns on the wagons and swinging them in our hands, and we all shouted at the top of our voices—a strange concert and gala performance in the heart of the bush. But at any rate we scared the lions—or else we outdistanced them—and before long the telegraphists left us: they were badly scared however, and I would not be surprised if before long they had again taken refuge in a tree.

It was hard work, tramping in the dust raised by the bullocks, and I often wished that I had a horse. One day I saw one, browsing by the roadside. The place was quite deserted and there

seemed no reason at all why a horse should be by itself in the heart of the African bush. The only explanation I could think of was that its owner had thought that it was bitten by fly and consequently had left it to die—though in that case it would have been kinder to shoot it. Or perhaps its owner had died. In any case, here was I, footsore and weary, and there was a horse apparently in fairly good condition. What was more I was the proud owner of a saddle which, since I had no steed, was carried idly on the wagon.

So I commandeered the horse and soon confirmed my original impression that if its previous owner had thought it ailing, he must have made a great mistake. In fact, after a very few miles I was as proud of my steed as Don Quixote was of Rosinante.

The next day I pushed ahead of the convoy and them ambled along, very contentedly with my pipe going, my eyes tolerably alert for the chance of game, and an agreeable feeling that though having charge of a convoy was poor fun when one had to trudge along behind it, it was really a very good life when one had a good animal between one's knees. And then without the slightest warning the horse dropped under me.

Instinctively I spread out both my legs, so that I found myself standing, much startled, astride the horse as it lay on the ground. Then I tried to get the animal to rise, but its legs seemed completely powerless. It struggled more or less into a sitting position, but there it stuck, looking at me most pathetically, and no amount of encouragement and assistance could get it to rise any further.

After a while the convoy arrived and the doctor, the mechanics, my batman, and half a dozen porters all set to work to help the horse to its feet; but though it looked several times as if we were about to succeed, failure always came in the end and at last the animal sank sideways on to the road.

Very reluctantly, after an hour of efforts, I came to the conclusion that there must be some paralysis of its spine which allowed it to sit but prevented it from standing, and at last I told one of the men to put it out of its misery.

He took aim with his rifle at the forehead of the horse, which then was in a sitting position, with its fore-legs stretched out in front. The man looked at me as if expecting an order to fire—and in that instant the horse quietly got up and walked towards him. It then kept on walking, about ten

yards ahead of the convoy, and all we had to do was to march behind until we reached a camp.

I suppose I should know from this extraordinary behaviour what was the matter with that horse, but I must confess I don't: nor have I ever been able to find any veterinary surgeon who could help me. It seems clear that whatever was its complaint, this was not the first attack: surely it must have been similarly stricken a day or two before and accordingly abandoned at the roadside by its previous owner? But the attack with which I struggled appears to have been the last, for I left it next morning in the camp and when I came that way again several months later, I learnt that it was still perfectly fit—so fit, indeed, that the story I had told on handing it over was hardly believed.

Meanwhile, my troubles multiplied, for the bullocks died daily from the terrible attacks of the tsetse fly, so that it soon became apparent that we should never reach our journey's end. We pressed on, doing all we could to save the beasts from unnecessary exhaustion, but one by one they collapsed by the roadside, where we had to shoot them: and those that did not fall became so thin and weak that before many days had passed a morning came when the convoy was

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unable to start. There was nothing for it then but to remain in camp, hoping that another convoy would come down the road and that from it we should be able to borrow assistance. But none came. We had camped beside water, but rations were short and all that district was unnaturally short of small game since the tide of battle had driven away all animals except the lions and an occasional rhinoceros. That afternoon I shot a small dik-dik—little enough for our party—but I had no other chance of replenishing the larder and I became very anxious about the future.

The map showed me that there was a camp of our troops some miles away and we at last decided that the only thing was for two of the men to set out in search of it—and of succour. Meanwhile, the rest of us lived on half rations which would again have had to be reduced by half if in the nick of time the men I sent had not returned with a rescue party in the shape of two army lorries to which all the contents of our convoy was transferred.

Some months later I found myself again on trek, this time in charge of 250 native porters, all of whom had been German porters, and an escort of five naval ratings. The convoy carried 500

gallons of petrol, 70 bombs, and an aeroplane tent weighing 1,800 lbs. We had to travel by forced marches 150 miles through country which was open to the enemy and which they were considered likely to raid: and as our total armament consisted of five rifles, a revolver and one Lewis gun, a good deal of watchfulness was called for.

The fact that our porters had once been on the other side was an extra danger because, not unnaturally, they were very anxious that the Germans should not find them now in our service; and as the danger of an attack increased, they began to desert. Each morning when we counted our porters before starting off, there were fewer than there had been the night before and consequently an ever-growing number of men had to be burdened with double loads.

One day I had trouble with one of my boots and I stopped on the road to set it right while the convoy went ahead. Just as I was starting again, several shots were fired at me from a belt of forest on my left. I took cover behind a big tree and watched for a few minutes, peeping carefully around to see if I could discover where the shooting came from. Finally, I noticed a movement in a tree and made up my mind that that was where the sniper was installed. I had no rifle, nor

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indeed any weapon except my revolver, so I decided to put up a big bluff. I fired six quick shots from the automatic, producing a sound very like that of a machine-gun; then I waited, ready to give a further imitation of traversing fire if necessary. But the bluff succeeded. The sniper apparently decided that a machine-gun was more than he had reckoned on and decamped. I cannot say I was sorry that he deprived me of his company.

Soon afterwards, when I had rejoined the convoy, we came on scattered outposts of our own forces. First there was a small camp of South Africans beside a river with very little water in it: a pitiable sight for every man was down with either fever or dysentery. A little further on I found a handful of men who were expecting a night attack and were much perturbed about it because the enemy raiders had a field-gun while they had nothing but their rifles. As I had to camp somewhere in the neighbourhood that night I decided to throw in my lot with them—although the attraction from their point of view was not so much the five sailors and myself, as the fact that we had a Lewis gun. We built a really first-class little fort with a commanding field of fire—but no attack developed.

The enemy always knew pretty exactly of our movements in that area: though flies swarmed everywhere, there were certainly none on their intelligence service. Our convoy presented a rich prize and soon we became aware that efforts were being made to cut us off; from time to time we would see columns of smoke rising which we knew to be signals (on the Red Indian method) from one enemy force to another. We were in hilly country now, and thick bush which provided splendid cover for a raiding party. I therefore decided that another bit of bluff was called for and when we camped I made a big show of fires, just as if we meant to stay in camp till morning: whereas our intention was to slip away through the darkness at midnight.

As things turned out, the enemy were provided with better evidence of our presence in the camp during the early part of the night than we had intended. Everyone except the sentries was asleep when suddenly there was a fearful yell and I awoke to find a crowd of blacks almost on top of me. I had been sleeping fully dressed but without my boots, and as I scrambled to my feet I grasped my loaded revolver. In springing up I caught my big toe against the root of a tree and nearly tore the nail off: this brought me abruptly

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to the ground again and as I fell the revolver went off.

No one was shot, but immediately complete quiet took the place of the hullabaloo which had filled the camp a moment before. And I then discovered that this excitement was not an attack by German askari as I had imagined, but only the result of a stray bullock having wandered among the sleeping forms of the porters.

My injured toe soon began to give me great pain, and a little later this spread rather alarmingly up my leg. But we had no doctor this time and all I could do was to dress the wound myself and press on. We dared not linger for I knew that at the head of the long valley up which we were marching, another valley met ours, and I suspected that the Germans would travel by that route, trying to cut us off—and cut us up—in the bottle neck. So although several of the porters were sick with what seemed to be a kind of pneumonia, and I was limping very badly, we hurried on, getting through the pass just in time.

The Germans were rather good at terrorizing the natives and enlisting their "noncombatant services." On this occasion when we reached the head of the valley and tried to buy eggs and fowls from a small village there, the Chief produced all

sorts of reasons why we should linger there for the night—the fowls, it appeared, were a long way off and could not possibly be fetched earlier than the following morning. Luckily, I saw through that and guessed that the Chief was acting “under instructions”; so I issued considerably more forcible “instructions” at the point of my revolver—and behold! all the fowls and eggs that I wanted appeared miraculously within five minutes.

We marched on and before long reached a point within nine miles of our destination. Yet we were still by no means out of danger from attack and our position became further complicated by the fact that my foot had swollen so much that I could not get my boot on and was entirely unable to walk. I dared not risk the safety of the convoy, so I sent it forward in the charge of the sailors, with instructions to press on with the utmost speed, while I stayed behind with a couple of porters hoping that two hours’ rest would show an improvement. But after that rest I was still unable to walk and there was nothing for it but to have a hammock made out of blankets and to let the porters carry me. I knew that by that time the pursuing Germans must be very close behind and although the convoy would

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probably escape, it seemed highly probable that I should not.

As I think I have mentioned, my weight at this time was over eighteen stone, so the two porters did not have an easy time with me; nor did they travel very fast. I constantly listened for sounds of pursuit and I had decided that, if the enemy came up with me, defence—with only my revolver—would be so hopeless that there would be nothing for it but to surrender and to trust that the German askaris would be kinder to a sick man than they have sometimes been reported to be.

Suddenly I heard a sound which I took to be the firing of a machine-gun, and I finally abandoned hope. But this was not the weapon of the advancing enemy—it was a motor-cycle coming at full speed down the road towards me with a message from the officer to whom I was to deliver the convoy. The message rather redundantly gave me the news that I was being pursued and advised me to press on with all possible speed! The cyclist then volunteered to give me a lift on his “pillion.” I accordingly released the porters, who very gladly set off down the road at a trot, and I climbed on to the back of the motor-cycle.

All went well for the first half-mile, but then we

came to a shallow, dried-up watercourse full of sand. There the machine nearly stuck. The cyclist straddled his machine so as to keep it upright, with both his feet on the ground, until we reached the further bank, and then, with the idea, I suppose, of getting a good "push off" on the firmer ground, he suddenly kicked out backwards. His heel caught me exactly on the end of my injured toe.

I have experienced various pains in my life, but for sheer agony I have never felt anything quite like that. The shock was so great that I fell backwards off the machine and then literally rolled with the pain. And though, willynilly, I had presently to clamber back on to the pillion, I changed over on to a horse as soon as opportunity occurred. Indeed, I have felt a hatred of motor-cycles ever since . . . and I still have trouble from that smashed joint of my big toe.

When at last, just before dark, I overtook the convoy and reached Iringa, the town I was making for, I was told that fighting was going on in the neighbourhood, that we were getting the worst of it, and that it seemed likely that the place would be captured by the enemy. Consequently, I was ordered to camp outside the fort and stand

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ready to destroy my precious convoy of petrol and bombs if they were endangered.

After all I had gone through, that seemed the last straw. To labour at convoying those supplies for 150 miles, to succeed despite a harassing pursuit and a severe personal injury in delivering them safe and sound—and then to be told to get ready at once to destroy them: well, it certainly tried my patience. And another night of considerable pain hardly proved a sedative. So—not having even yet become broken in to the unfeelingness of military discipline—I was in a fairly explosive condition when, the first thing next morning, no attack having matured, I was ordered to move on to Didomah.

However, there was nothing for it; and all our difficulties were to begin again. This time we were short of both food and water. I had been told that I should find a dump and a pool at the end of the first fifteen miles; but the dump was non-existent and the pool was mainly occupied by a dead horse. Nor was any food to be obtained from natives—the Germans had recently occupied the district and had drained it dry.

In these circumstances I was a little relieved when later in the day I came suddenly on a small well beside which were two officers and seven

men. There were also three new graves. It appeared that a party of twelve of the South Africans had been attacked here the day before by a couple of hundred of the enemy. The attack, supported by machine-guns, was a complete surprise and but for the fact that the South Africans found cover in a small natural depression (like a sunken road) with bank-like walls a foot high, they would probably have been wiped out. As it was, though all the bushes and trees around the spot were cut to ribbons by machine-gun and rifle fire, those three graves marked the total of the South African casualties; and eventually the enemy were beaten off with a loss, it was believed, of seventy killed and wounded, these heavy casualties being largely caused by the Germans shooting their own people across the heads of the crouching South Africans.

The next morning, after a sleepless night owing to the pain in my foot, I rode—on a fly-bitten horse which I had picked up—towards Didomah. But before we had gone very far we were overtaken by a motor-cyclist who brought two written orders for me. The one I opened first told me to press on to Didomah with all possible speed. The other told me to return at once to Iringa. *Neither of these orders was dated.*

The question was, of course, which countermanded which. The cyclist didn't know, and nor did I: but since it was a choice between another two hundred miles on or less than fifty miles back, with no supplies of food in either case, I gave myself the benefit of the doubt and duly considered myself as ordered to return.

Before I had covered five miles, I met a man who told me that Iringa was in the hands of the Germans. I then reconsidered the problem—but arrived at the same conclusion. The choice, it seemed to me, lay between Didomah plus safety minus food and Iringa plus food minus safety. And food in the mouth seemed worth a lot of safety in the bush.

As it happened, my choice was right. Iringa was not captured, and it was because it was now regarded as safe that I had been ordered to return. So I stayed at Iringa until my toe was well.

While there I got the news that Selous had been killed. His company of the Royal Fusiliers was endeavouring to cut the retreat of a superior German force near Kissaki. The enemy arrived earlier than they were expected to do and surprised Selous when he was making his way to a point from which he intended to surprise them. In that predicament he rose to the emergency,

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attacked the Germans and drove them back. He then halted his men under cover and went forward alone to reconnoitre the enemy's new position. And while lying with his glasses to his eyes, he was shot through the head.

This unhappy news awoke in me the desire to return to my battalion. Special service is all very well in its way and it often means that a man is being more usefully employed than if he were serving as a regimental officer. But one misses the camaraderie of battalion life, the *esprit-de-corps*, the feeling that if one is going to be wounded or killed, one will at least be tended or buried by one's pals. In fact, in course of time one becomes thoroughly homesick and anxious to be back again "in the thick of it." Moreover, I was very fond of my Colonel, who unfolded to me more of his life than he did to anyone else.

So as soon as I was able to march, I applied to be returned to the battalion and in due course received orders to join them near Didomah. For the journey of two hundred miles I was in charge of nine sick men. A lorry was to meet us soon after the start, so that according to programme the journey should have been fairly comfortable. But it didn't work out like that—because someone had omitted to take into account the fact that

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the rains had come. We met the lorry, all right: it was on the near bank of what had been a few days before, a dried-up river bed—now it was an impassable torrent. To get the lorry across was out of the question, and it was a puzzle how to cross it ourselves. However, at last I found some narrows, spanned by a fallen tree, which the men were able to cross, straddle leg, jerking themselves along with their hands. I came last, because one of the sick men had become delirious with fever and it was my job to get him over.

I thought it likely that he would struggle and throw me into the water, which was flowing very fast. So I tied a rope round my waist and got the men who had already crossed to stand ready to pull if disaster threatened. The incident provided me with some very uncomfortable moments, because, half-way over, the sick man began to shudder and sway and to clutch at my guiding arms; but, fortunately, I managed to soothe him and to get him to shut his eyes, so that the safe-guarding rope was not after all required. But I don't want the experience again.

Just how precarious this business of crossing swollen rivers could be was shown to us at the next river. Here a bark rope had been tied between two trees, one on either bank, and

buoyed up on a series of floating petrol tins: and with this support all who came that way had to ford the river. Before we started, two sepoys in full kit came down the opposite bank. Keeping their hands on the rope, they pulled a little raft forward until they were in the deepest part of the fast-running stream. Exactly what happened then, I never discovered; perhaps the current forced the rope out of their hands, or perhaps one lost hold of it and the other let go in an effort to save him. In any case, the raft capsized and they disappeared in an instant—and, of course, no one could swim in such a stream when weighed down by a heavy army kit.

I had no hope of seeing the men alive again: and there was nothing that one could do to save them. Imagine then my amazement when a full minute later I saw two specks in the water forty or fifty yards down stream: they were half-way between the two banks and about ten yards apart. And as I watched, the two specks grew and revealed the heads of the two men, then their shoulders, then their bodies. Incredible as it may sound, they had kept their feet and had actually walked—I almost said marched—for forty yards under water. And although a little blown, they

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were able to wade ashore unassisted; whereupon they walked coolly up to their Colonel, saluted, and reported themselves for duty!

When our turn came, we boarded another raft made out of petrol tins and by holding to the rope managed to pull ourselves across without adventure. And indeed, I had no more adventures for some months, since very soon after I rejoined the battalion in Morogoro, not far from Didomah, the 25th Royal Fusiliers, shattered and war-weary, were ordered to South Africa to reorganize and refit during the rainy season.

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WE went first by rail to Darsalaam. On the journey in a truck with the door open I caught a chill which rapidly developed into black-water fever. Though I had never had it before I knew the symptoms and also the remedies, and when I awoke with the fever on me, I lay still while my boy carried out my instructions, fetching hot sandbags to place against my kidneys, a big supply of blankets, and a great deal of cold water to drink. The bout lasted for four days and then I felt well enough to join the battalion when they boarded a ship which had been captured from the Germans, and in which they were to travel south.

On the voyage I heard the full story of the battalion's doings whilst I was with the R.N.A.S.; of their part in the great advance under Smuts which led to the capture of Kilimanjaro; of their marches through the most difficult country in East Africa, where disease caused more casualties than the German rifles and machine-guns; of

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numerous ambushes, raids and attacks. I heard of the astounding doings of Pretorius, an ex-Boer settler who joined our intelligence service and would disappear for weeks at a time into the heart of country held by the enemy, and reappear when everyone imagined him lost with a quiet tale of his discoveries.

When we reached Durban, we travelled on by train to Capetown, where most of the battalion were pronounced too sick for further service in Africa and sent back to England. But reinforcements came to take their place and so with a nucleus of officers, N.C.O.'s and men, and some hundreds of recruits, the now famous battalion rose like the Phœnix from its ashes and prepared to take its place once more in the War.

After some weeks of training, interspersed with the usual amusing round of dances and army theatricals, we were ordered north again, via Durban to German East Africa. Just before we started on from Durban it was found that the ship's bunkers were on fire. Water was poured on to the coal and we sailed, very little behind time, under the impression that all was well. But the effect of the water was only to cake over the hot coal on top, leaving an enclosed, gas-laden space inside. In due course the stokers dug through

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the crust—and immediately the gas exploded, killing many of the men. But by that time we were out of sight of land and there was nothing for it but to steam on—with as much smoke pouring from the airshaft of the bunkers as came through the funnel—until we could lie up in a bay on the Portuguese coast.

There I and one other officer were transferred to a small turbine steamer and sent ahead to make camping preparations. We had a six-inch gun mounted in the bows and came in for a little naval work as a side-line to our normal military operations. We chased two vessels, with our searchlight playing ahead and the gun ready to fire—an exciting pursuit although in this case it was fruitless for our first quarry turned out to be an English cable-boat, while the second escaped us in the darkness.

However, each man to his last, and it was good finally to be on the march again in German East Africa, this time on an expedition the object of which was to capture one of the Konigsberg's guns.

Here, once again, my experience of Africa stood me in good stead—indeed, it saved me and my whole company from being caught in an ambush and probably annihilated. Soon after we landed, my company—I had taken over that

previously commanded by Selous—became the advance guard of the battalion. I was supplied with a native guide, but I took care to keep beside him and to supplement his knowledge with my own observations. We came to the breast of a little ridge and looked on to a swampy valley, thickly grown on the opposite side with bushes and larger trees. Down across the valley and up the further slope ran a path, and the guide was for leading me along it.

It was quite a normal African scene, and yet the moment I came upon it I felt instinctively that there was something wrong. I questioned the guide, but he insisted that that was the right way—and he seemed in a hurry to go forward. Hesitating, I looked again. And then I realized that what was wrong was that the ground had an *unnatural* look—it was too bare—it could not have grown like that: surely it must have been cleared? And if that were so, with what purpose except to deprive it of cover for our advance?

Coming to this conclusion, I immediately became convinced that this was an ambush: that in the thicker country beyond the swamp the enemy would be hidden on the ridge opposite, with machine-guns, waiting for us to appear in the open.

Consequently, I halted my men and extended them, just under cover of the long grass, while I considered the possibilities of a turning movement. Then our second-in-command—a man new to Central Africa—walked up and expostulated with me for not advancing. Why didn't I get on? There was a path; I had only to march along it. Surely that was easy enough? And so on. I told him that we were marching into a trap and that I intended to wait for the Colonel.

The second-in-command pooh-poohed this, and ordered me to advance.

I didn't like the idea of it and had serious thoughts of refusing. But just at that moment Colonel Driscoll hurried up. He took one look at the country ahead, saw what I had seen and agreed that we had been walking into an ambush. I was ordered to take up a position on the crest of the ridge, but not for the moment to advance; and then the Colonel and the second-in-command—of whom I was heartily glad to see the last—went back to bring forward the rest of the battalion.

When I had my men deployed in their new position, it occurred to me to look for the guide. He was nowhere to be seen and no one could tell me how or when he had disappeared. But certain

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it was that he had slipped away while the going was good—and I have little doubt that in due course he went back, with a consciousness of having very nearly succeeded in his task, to his real masters who were not our intelligence service but that of the enemy.

However, there was nothing to be done about it at that moment, so I checked once again the positions of my men and chose a spot for myself near a small group of trees.

At that moment the Germans, realizing, no doubt, that we had avoided the trap, opened fire. Ours wasn't at all a pleasant position, for although there were a few inches of rising ground in front of us, we had no entrenching tools and all the men could do to get extra cover was to scoop out small furrows in the loose ground with their tin cups. The enemy fire was so heavy that all the leaves on a small tree above me were cut off and began to fall like snowflakes about my ears. Several of my men were hit and presently, while I was standing under cover of a tree and examining the enemy's position through field-glasses, I felt a shattering blow on my leg which brought me to the ground. I crawled behind the tree and examined the leg, expecting to find a nasty wound. Instead I found nothing, not even a scratch or a

tear in my clothing; and the only explanation of the blow that I could think of was that a bullet had hit the loose ground under my foot and given me a sort of concussion.

Under Colonel Driscoll's orders we had taken up our position so that we appeared to cover the flank of the ambush. But the enemy's line was considerably longer than we knew, and instead of being at the end of it we were somewhere near the middle, where it bent round to our left and rear. In fact we were surrounded on three sides. We did not know that at the time, but as the firing grew heavier and enemy machine-guns opened at eighty yards range on our flank, I realized that our position was decidedly a dangerous one. The Germans—or those of them that we were aware of—were in long grass only eighty yards away, and I saw that if we were attacked we should probably be overwhelmed in a few minutes. (Though I did not know it till later, a party of K.A.R.s tried to create a diversion in order to save us, but were themselves overwhelmed.) I was considering the prospects of charging with my small force, in the rather desperate hope of being at least able to get into a better position, when I heard shouts on my right and saw the inspiring sight of the rest of the battalion, some

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550 strong, charging the enemy, with our gallant old Colonel well ahead.

We joined in at that and in a very few minutes the enemy were completely routed. We cleared the valley and reached the position of the Konigsberg gun—but alas, the gun itself had been withdrawn down a trolley line.

That night we slept where we had fought. Heavy rain fell and the weather became very cold, and as the men were very thinly clad the seeds of a good deal of sickness were sown in the night. That sickness overtook us within three days in the shape of fever and dysentery and the old metaphor of men “going down like flies” for once became really apposite. I escaped, yet by this time I was by no means fit. A bad attack of neuritis had put my left arm practically out of action, and I still felt occasional effects of the attack of blackwater fever. So I was now sent down for a few days’ rest at Zanzibar.

By that time only two of the officers who had originally left England with the battalion in 1915, remained—Martin Ryan and myself. Martin—a famous elephant hunter—was with me in Zanzibar, and I well remember his prophecy, one night, that he would be killed in the next fight. I laughed at him, having little belief at that time in

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presentiments, though subsequent events have made me rather less sure. In any case, ten days later Martin was shot dead.

I missed that fight, and indeed, though I did not realize it then, my war experiences were ended. The morning after I rejoined the battalion a telegram came asking for my transfer to the 1st (General Van Deventer's) Division for aerial photography, and back I went once more to the coast. But before I reached it, I went down with a terrible attack of fever and dysentery in the middle of which, in an unconscious state, I was hoisted on board a hospital ship.

So ended my four years of war in German East Africa.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE ACHIEVEMENT OF A PHOTOGRAPHER

IT is a very far cry from 1918 to 1935, and I do not want my readers to imagine, because I cover so much ground in a single chapter, that I rusticated during all those years. I certainly did not. But many of my more recent adventures have been somewhat fully described in books which I have published during the last ten years and rather than repeat myself I would refer my readers to those volumes.

Soon after the Armistice I was invited by the War Office to lecture among the British troops in Belgium and Germany. During many years of lecturing I have never had such enthusiastic audiences. Once, at Dinant, I spoke in a large dismantled factory crowded with Australians. I was not able to show my films as no cinematograph projector could be found, there was no platform (I stood on two bales of hay, while the chairman sat on a third), and the audience had to stand as there were no seats. Incidentally, it had been raining all the morning and many of the

soldiers must have been wet through. One might have thought that in such circumstances the audience would soon get restive. But not a bit of it. After I had spoken for an hour, I stopped and said: "Now, have you heard enough of this? Are you fed up?" "No!" they shouted. So I went on again. Some time later I again asked the question and received the same reply, in a great shout. So I licked my rather dry lips (since there was no chairman's table, there was no glass of water) and continued telling stories. Finally, I couldn't do any more. I simply couldn't. I said: "Well, if you are not fed up, I am dried up," and sat down on my bales of hay amid shouts of laughter and applause.

We then went along to the officers' mess in order to give my throat some much needed lubrication. I was told that the Prince of Wales had been there a few days before. During his visit, the Prince offered one young subaltern a cigar, and the subaltern, who was a non-smoker, lacked the nerve to decline: the result, so he told me, was the worst thing he experienced in the whole War!

Perhaps lecturing does not rightly come under the heading of adventures, yet it has a thrill of its own. Certainly my first lecture, when I was a

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very young man, caused me more palpitation than my first meeting with a lion in Africa. I was trying to speak from only partly memorized notes, and of course in the first minute I forgot everything. In a frantic effort to gain time, I began with the words, "You know—" and whenever I again lost the thread I filled up the gap in the same way: "You know—" And then someone in the front of the audience said rather loudly: "We *don't* know. That's why we're here." It was a lesson which I have never forgotten.

But if ordinary lecturing to an unknown audience can be nerve-wracking, there is one similar experience which is far more terrifying—in anticipation; and that is speaking at a command performance before Their Majesties the King and Queen. However, the very kind and gracious reception, the naturalness of Their Majesties and their obvious appreciation of the performance entirely put me at my ease from the moment when I arrived at Windsor Castle.

Apart from my lecturing, I had many expeditions abroad. I went diamond-hunting in South Africa—without success. I renewed my acquaintance with the Sahara and explored Algeria. I went many times to Central Africa and twice to that very remarkable little island off Capetown

which is inhabited by about five million penguins, and which I have described in my book *The Island of Penguins*. I went into Zululand in order to fulfil an old ambition and secure photographs of the rare white rhino. And I added a great deal of interest and pleasure to my life by keeping a number of unusual pets—several chimpanzees, a mongoose, a rare species of white rat, a giant spider, snakes, a penguin, and a little grey monkey. All these creatures I kept with a proper regard for their natural habits and an equal amount of concern to imitate as far as possible their normal surroundings. Keeping such strange creatures even in a remote Kentish valley was not easy, and more than once considerable alarm was caused to my neighbours when a chimpanzee went over the garden wall. I have written somewhat fully of these pets elsewhere—of my complete failure, for instance, to get on sociable terms with the penguin, and of the extraordinary success achieved by my wife in teaching the trap-door spider to play games—and I need not repeat these stories here. But since my chimpanzee, Mary, to whom I have already referred, won by the vividness and charm of her own personality a host of friends all over the country, I must now tell the tragic story of her death.

I was completing my preparations for an expedition to Africa. As my wife and I had closed our house in the country and were then living in an hotel, Mary went to the Zoo. There she developed pneumonia—that dread disease which puts an end to so many apes and monkeys in this country. In a few days' time, I was informed that the crisis had arrived—and that there was very little chance of her pulling through. But Mary was more than a pet, she was a very dear friend; and we were determined not to lose her without a struggle. The organizing of our expedition occupied the whole of my own time, but my wife insisted on becoming Mary's nurse. For two nights during the worst of the crisis, she sat on a deck-chair in Mary's room in the Zoo Hospital, giving her brandy and repeatedly administering oxygen. What this entailed will only be appreciated by those who have had a similar experience, for night-time in a zoo is very different from the day-time in the same place, and being compelled to stay within the small area of an enclosed space, there, is quite another matter from being able to wander about. Again and again, too, the silence of the night is broken by alarming sounds from innumerable creatures. But the Zoo authorities were kindness itself, and in every way

were most considerate and helpful: and my wife's effort was successful, in so far as after the second night the doctors pronounced Mary to be out of danger. Then the chimpanzee appeared quickly to put on strength so that when we left England for Central Africa a fortnight later, she was judged fit to accompany us.

If she had succeeded in reaching her native Africa, I think all would have been well. But in the Red Sea we encountered a spell of heat which was exceptional even in those latitudes, and in the midst of it Mary was again taken ill, this time with heat-stroke.

Again we nursed her, but we had very little hope. Early one morning, as she lay in my wife's arms, becoming conscious for a few seconds, she looked up and we could have sworn that she gave us the glimmering of a faint smile. And so she died.

We buried her at sea—a real friend, the tragedy of whose life was that with a marvellous degree of intelligence and far more of understanding than is the lot of the ordinary ape, she nevertheless just lacked that little more which would have given her possibilities of self-expression. Again and again, as I talked to her or played with her, I was beset by the idea that she

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had thoughts which she wanted to speak and that she was sad because she knew that she had not that power. It was like playing with a deaf and dumb child.

So, many of these years between 1918 and 1935 have passed, always very full of interests and always fully occupied with work. I added continually to my store of knowledge of natural history and through my lectures and books this knowledge was passed on to my public. But the greatest of my tasks during the later part of these years was to acquire an entirely new craft which had not been in existence when I began to take cinematograph films in Africa and which the march of Progress—if it is to be called that—forced me to learn.

Before the War, natural history cinematograph films were a constant wonder to the public and always a “draw.” But those of us who were pioneers soon had imitators, and these imitators, as invariably happens, tried to “go one better” than the men they copied. As the cinematograph became more popular, its story-telling possibilities ruled it and films which did not tell a story came to be classed as “educational.” Mammon in the

shape of box-office receipts ordained that however exciting a "true" cinematograph film might be, it could not have the popular appeal won by a story of the surplanting of villains and the triumph of true love. Accordingly, it became clear that the natural-history film must become either a thing to be shown only to school-children, or else it must be impregnated with a sex story. Again Mammon triumphed over art, and the wild-life "story" film came into being.

Unfortunately the producer who is ruled only by his box office is much more concerned with excitement than with truth.

Why, he often declares, need films showing African animals be taken in Africa? That is merely an unnecessary expense, when the requisite animals can be obtained from dealers or private zoos and photographed in prepared enclosures; and if more animals are needed in a single shot than the zoos can provide, it is easy to fill the background with the help of a taxidermist and a scene painter. And since excitement is the one thing—apart from love—that the public wants, why limit it by a strict regard to truth? If we go to the expense of taking some of the shots in Africa, let us do the job thoroughly and get in something more than the maximum of thrills.

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With the resources of double exposure and trick photography let us have fights between the animals (what does it matter if the naturalists say that such animals have never been known to fight each other?), let us have trick pictures showing natives being eaten alive by lions, let us have gigantic apes and let us fit imitation ears on to Indian elephants to make them seem the more dangerous-looking African elephants. It may be that rhinos go singly or in groups of three or four, but it would look much more exciting on the screen if twenty of them charged together—then why not? Anything to provide the public with thrills and to swell the box-office returns.

So said, in effect, the new producers of wild-life pictures. And if such productions involved cruelty, what did that matter? The public wouldn't know how the pictures were procured.

Thus, amazing films appeared on the screen, and the public gasped. This was far better, they thought, than the dull old "true to life" stuff which they had been shown before! This was what they would want to see next time.

So the real natural history film, of which I had been the pioneer, ignominiously died. And with it threatened to go all my work as a natural history cinematographer.

Of course, the obvious thing for me to do would have been to embrace the new methods and show my ingenuity in producing artificial thrills to make a deluded public squirm in its seats with excitement. But I couldn't do that. Or rather, I wouldn't. I have little doubt that if I had made that choice I could have been as ingenious as anyone; and perhaps the fact that I knew the truth would have helped me occasionally in perverting it to notable lies. But I love animals, and those of Africa especially. It does not please me to misrepresent my friends. I value my box-office returns, but I am not prepared to swell them by prostituting my knowledge.

Nor am I for a moment prepared to countenance cruelty to animals. Some of the things done in the preparation of these films are unspeakable. We sometimes claim that more latitude is allowed in the United States than would be tolerated in this country: but much of the production of animal films involves procedure which is so cruel that it has to be done in Mexico—because the United States would not permit it. And yet pictures made under those conditions are seen by high-minded English people and applauded. Though to some extent a reaction has now—I am glad to say—set in, it would still be very advisable if

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a qualified naturalist with photographic experience among wild animals could be appointed as Censor of all films in which animals play a part.

Because I felt so strongly on these points, I decided to stand for truth in natural history films. But since it was now clear that a film that had an element of fiction in it was meat for adults whereas one that contained nothing but the truth could only be exhibited mainly to children, I determined to include stories in my films—and yet to avoid departing from my principles. My films should show stories, but the setting of them should be truth. The stories should be the vehicles to carry studies of real natural history, and the stories themselves, their scenes and their actors, should all fit closely into real life.

I therefore went to Central Africa with a story in my mind which was based in part on an old legend of one of the native tribes. I adapted it to suit my requirements, but I was always careful to keep the alterations in tune with the correct surroundings and the possibilities of African life. There were to be no white people in the story—only natives; and accordingly I had to undertake the somewhat difficult task of persuading natives to act for me, and of explaining to them exactly what was required. I chose the Wakamba tribe

because some years before I had got some of those people to act a few scenes in an African film play and I had then been impressed by their capabilities as actors.

I have explained in an earlier chapter that many African natives are fond of acting in their own way. Of course, most of their dances are largely histrionic, representing scenes from hunting and war and so on. And, as I have related, most of the tribesmen delight in imitating any action which strikes them as at all unusual. But imitations and acting are as far removed from one another as dumb crambo from grand opera. I wanted Wakamba men and women to act all the scenes of a film-story, each scene leading up to the next and yet each natural in itself.

The difficulty was increased by the fact that none of these people had ever seen a cinematograph film, so that it was almost impossible to explain to them why I wanted them to do extraordinary things such as suddenly climbing a tree and immediately climbing down again, running from one point marked on the ground to another, and so on. Incidentally, though I can talk more than one Central African dialect, I do not know that of the Wakamba, and consequently all my directions had to be given through an interpreter.

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I decided from the start that explanations were impossible. I should never get them to understand that I wanted them to act the scenes in a entirely imaginary story so that I, by means of my little black box, could enable people in England to see, months later, all that had been done. I must therefore engage them to work for me and count on their doing what they were told for no reason except to earn their pay. And, without attempting to explain the story, I must say, "Now run here," "Now hold this fish in the air and say something to these men."

Some of my readers will be surprised to hear that on the whole this method worked admirably. The natives did not even show much curiosity about what they were doing or why they were doing it, and (since rehearsals were necessary) they were quite patient when told to perform the same apparently stupid action again and again. I would tell one man that he was to walk forward from a certain point and when he reached a small stone which I had placed on the ground, he was suddenly to jump into the air and then bolt forward again. I don't for an instant imagine that he realized that in my mind the small stone marked an imaginary crevice in which a snake was hidden—but, nevertheless, he did exactly

what was asked of him . . . and asked no questions.

My first task was to choose the actors and actresses. I had a dance arranged and about a thousand people took part in it. I walked between the lines of dancers and picked out about fifty of them, trying, in general, to spot what are called "cinematograph faces." An unchanging, wooden expression was no use to me: and especially I wanted clear-cut "types"—an old man to play the part of a chief, a witch-doctor (cunning-looking and yet a trifle mystic), a "juvenile lead," a young woman for the heroine, a child, and a number of other people for less important parts. I then started to make camera tests for the sake of further elimination. Eventually, I chose a really handsome girl (by chance she happened to be one of the four wives of one of my cooks) for the heroine, and an equally good-looking young man to act as her husband, a child, who turned out to be the greatest success of the film, and a number of men of various ages in addition to the "crowd."

I paid these people a weekly wage and found it a good plan to add an extra reward in the shape of a blanket or some beads when I wanted something particularly well done.

But although in a general way, the acting went

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fairly smoothly, there were a great many difficulties of a quite unexpected kind. The action of my story was only supposed to cover a few weeks and most of it took place in a journey when the hero and his family were entirely out of touch with any village. Hence, obviously, it was essential that the three main characters (the hero, his wife and their child) should not change their appearance in any way. Their clothing, though fortunately consistent with the views of the British Board of Censors, was not so elaborate that any great variety was likely to be found in it; but there were other details in which they liked to achieve a variety from day to day which did not suit my plans at all.

Both men and women of the Wakamba tribe are accustomed to shave their heads, the men leaving a little round tuft at the upper part of the back, to which they attach (by adhesion) a small white disc made of shell. For photographic purposes a shaven head is unsightly, so I made my actors grow a quarter of an inch of hair all over their heads, with the little tuft a trifle longer. For some days I had been photographing one man in various positions where his close-cropped head and the little tuft of hair clearly showed. Then one morning he appeared with his head

clean shaven except for the small tuft. Whether or not the change was an improvement to his appearance, I am not qualified to say: but certainly it was a disaster to me, for I had to hold up all the proceedings for more than a week while the hair grew again!

Some time later my "leading lady" did precisely the same thing, shaving off a particularly prominent piece of hair. Again the production had to be stopped. But time by then was short, for the rains were coming on and when they came the animals would move to other parts, while the deterioration of roads and the swelling of rivers would make transport exceedingly difficult. I therefore decided to send the woman back to her kraal for a week (judging that that would be time enough for her hair to grow again) while I went further afield to photograph scenery and animals.

When I returned at the end of the week, the leading lady returned also, and I was delighted to learn that the hair was fully restored. But then to my horror I discovered another change: on both arms from the elbow to the shoulder she had had fitted a long spiral armlet of beaten silver. These armlets were not merely slipped on—they had been fastened on by the native blacksmith, and they were so tight that they pressed into her skin.

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Wearing them must have been excruciatingly painful, but then even civilized women, I believe, will endure agonies in the cause of Fashion. The fixing of these armlets had taken two whole days, and they had cost nearly all the money that I had hitherto paid her. She was intensely proud of them, and my suggestion that they must be removed was met with a paroxysm of temper and tears. The suggestion was obviously an outrage—and yet the film couldn't be continued while the armlets were there. I argued and protested and badgered her, and wheedled and tried to persuade her (all of which processes are very difficult through the medium of an interpreter), but it was useless. The tears flowed and she stamped her foot and flatly refused to do what I wanted.

Finally, I sent for the headman of her kraal and enlisted his aid. What argument he used that I had not, I do not know. But after another two hours—two hours of perfect photographic light, which were utterly wasted—she very grudgingly and stormily submitted while the blacksmith removed the offending armlets. That operation occupied a further two hours! And then we found that underneath them her arms (very naturally) were badly swollen.

Yet even if they hadn't been, it would have

been of no use. She was still much too angry and tearful to act, and the rest of that day passed in sobs and arguments punctuated by cries from her of "Give me back my jewels!" We promised that she should have them back in four days' time, when the film would be finished, but that was no use—she wanted them at once, and I doubt if we should ever have pacified her if it had not occurred to my wife to promise that if she would be good for four days we would not only have the armlets refixed for her, but would give her as a present a corresponding pair of ornaments to decorate her legs from ankle to calf. Then—like the crying child who has been promised a sweetie—she slowly began to smile, and after that all was well. I doubt whether stars at Hollywood are more exasperating to their "producers" than this lady was to us—and I am certain that no one of them is more the envy of less favoured mortals than this one was, when she finally returned to her kraal decorated on legs as well as arms with spirals of beaten silver.

We had somewhat similar troubles with a young boy who filed his teeth in the middle of a scene—and since it is no use waiting a week in the expectation that filed teeth will grow again, we had no choice but to retire him from the cast and

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choose another actor, thus wasting all the pieces of film in which he had appeared.

And yet, odd as it may seem, we had no difficulties and experienced no tantrums in dealing with the child who played an important part in the film. She was wonderful. She thoroughly enjoyed the experience and was always happy and full of fun. Indeed, the only threat of a contretemps with her was when for the purposes of the film we wanted her to cry. She was happy and laughing at the time and I must admit that it was rather a lot to ask of any small child. But we shamelessly resorted to the obvious method of bribery, explained carefully what was wanted—and then held out two sweets. It is improbable that the child had ever seen or tasted such things before (we had brought them in a tin from England with this special purpose in mind), but I suppose their bright colours appealed to her. For she did exactly what was asked of her, screwing up her face and making real tears roll down her cheeks—and then, directly the scene was finished, smiled brightly and held out her hand for the promised sweets. How she managed it, I don't know; but again and again we proved that this little African child had the makings of a marvellous actress. I sometimes wonder whether in the

next twenty years she will settle down quietly as a married woman in her African kraal—or whether the seeds that I sowed will cause her to blossom out as a film actress who might one day become world famous.

This possibility is not so remote as it may sound, for the powers of African natives in film-acting are now becoming recognized, and the Wakamba tribe are getting their full share of the work. Now, the task of producers is a great deal easier than it was when I first introduced the Wakamba to cinematography, partly because they are becoming experienced, but more especially because they are now beginning to realize what these strange doings of the white man mean. My completed film did not reach Nairobi till two years after I had taken it, but then someone had the bright idea that it would be a good “publicity stunt” to bring the actors to the theatre where the film was being shown. Arrangements were accordingly made and a lorry was sent into the wilds. The actor who had played the part of the hero was persuaded to appear, doubtless feeling very much bewildered, for a minute on the stage and then the whole party were given free seats. The show started and these astonished natives cried out again and again as they beheld themselves



“AHOY, THERE!”



THE DANGERS OF ANIMAL PHOTOGRAPHY.

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and their friends, again doing the things that they had done in front of me two years before!

Along with the pictures of natives which I took for this film, I had to take a great many of animals and, in accordance with the principles which I had laid down for my work, I had, as far as was practicable without involving human beings in undue danger, to show men and animals together in the same "shot."

An important incident in the story of this film was that the hero, having been cast out by his own tribe, eventually became the chief of another tribe because he had what appeared to be magical powers, particularly in being able to make a crocodile come when he called it. (It is a fact that some natives are able to do this.) In taking this scene I clearly had to have man and crocodile in the same picture. The crocodile, an immense beast, was lying on the shores of a lake (Lake Victoria, in point of fact) and I must admit that it didn't look the kind of creature you would want to go to and pat on the back. There it lay, its beady eyes slowly moving from side to side as it watched me bring forward the cinematograph camera and set it up on its tripod only twelve

feet away. Then the native who was playing the part of the hero had to raise his arm and walk between the lake and the crocodile, as if calling to the creature to follow him.

Now, while this sounds rather a daring procedure, (although all the time there was twenty feet between the man and the crocodile) there was no real danger as long as the native kept out of reach of the brute's jaws and also as long as he watched the crocodile so as to be able to move instantly if the animal turned to bring its tail into the range of action. Yet the native didn't like the prospect at all. Since I have always loathed crocodiles, I must confess that if I had been less keen on getting the picture I wanted, I should entirely have sympathized with him; but as it was, the picture came first in my mind and when it finally became apparent that the native did not intend to go where I wished, I decided that I must show him how free from danger the action was—that I must do myself what I wanted him to do, and then persuade him that if I could do it safely so could he.

I went within *eight* feet of that crocodile—and just as I was at that distance from the animal, I very foolishly turned to speak to the native, meaning to impress on him how safe everything

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was. Up till that moment, the crocodile had been content to watch me: but the instant I looked away, it turned suddenly, lashed out with its powerful tail and then, turning again, snapped at me with its jaws and missed me by no more than six inches.

After that, as may be imagined, it was still more difficult to get the native to walk into the right position! Indeed, I entirely failed to persuade him, and although I did eventually secure a few feet of film which included both the man and the crock, they were not nearly as close to one another as I should have liked . . . though even then they were probably rather closer than the native liked.

We had other adventures with baboons, elephants, snakes and hyenas, some of which very successfully added realism to the picture. And at that I was glad, for realism was what I wanted—not the sham realism of the faked and super-exciting film, but that of life as it is truly lived in the African jungle, both by animals and men.

All my life, my aim has been to bring that true realism before the public.

For more than thirty years I have carried my cinematograph cameras into the home-country of wild creatures, producing pictures of them as they

ADVENTURES WITH ANIMALS AND MEN

live when they have no idea that they are observed. To procure those true records and to put them before the public has always been my ideal. In doing so I have had many adventures, have run many risks. Yet I think I can claim that I have accomplished what I set out to do.

Life does not let any of us stand still. It has been a long journey from the day when I bought that five-shilling camera in my boyhood to the present time when I am still producing films of animal life; yet all of it has been a grand adventure. Looking back, as I do now, down the avenue of years, I can honestly say, as Leigh Hunt, said: "Thank God I have enjoyed my life."

